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thechronicle
FEBRUARY 3, 2011
15p when sold
AN EDITION OF THE SANDWELL AND GREAT BARR CHRONICLE

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It's a real toy story for little Jake – see page 15

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Youth service jobs could go in shake-up

A STAFF shake-up is expected to lead to more than a dozen job losses within Sandwell Council's young people's services department.

The authority has announced a restructure and reduction programme which will lead to more than 21 redundancies, though some new roles will be created.

A 30-day consultation period about the job cuts is now taking place and, if approved, workers could go as early as June.

The cash-strapped council is currently battling to save £75 million over the next four years.

A report to the borough's cabinet member for youth, culture and leisure, Councillor Ann Shackleton, said the staffing restructuring would lead to the losses of more than 14 fulltime equivalent posts.

The report states: "It was proposed to revise the current way of working to focus specifically on the borough's different geographical areas. This linked with the council's new organisational structures and reduced the need for six teams down to three.

"Moreover, this created a more equitable and efficient way of working and greater budgetary control would be exercised centrally."

Payouts

The authority is also facing a multi-million pound bill for redundancy payouts.

Bosses have set aside a £4m cash pot and have been given permission to borrow a further £5.7m from the Government.

The authority has said that a total of 800 jobs council jobs could be at risk next year due to budget cuts. A total of 150 posts have already gone from children's services, including staff working in children's social care, the youth offending team and primary and secondary school consultants.

Cllr Shackleton added: "As a response to Government cuts, the council has had to restructure young people's services.

"In effect, the budget has been cut by 20 per cent.

"This has meant the service has had to save £500,000 for 2011/12 which unfortunately will result in some redundancies.

"This is a difficult time for Young People's Services. Whilst we are concerned about any loss of jobs, this has had to happen."

53-YEAR-OLD MAN BRANDED A DANGER TO CHILDREN

PERVERT TEACHER IS JAILED

A PRIMARY school teacher who led a double life as a "manipulative and deceptive" paedophile has been jailed for six years for abusing three pupils decades ago in Oldbury.

Josef Norford, aged 53, was labelled a "real danger to young boys" after being found guilty of sexualy abusing the youngsters at Brandhall Primary School.

Norford kissed and touched the youngsters from the Edinburgh Road school, often several times a week.

Judge Michael Challinor told him at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Monday: "You were in a position of trust and you used your position to groom the boys.

"Your tactics were subtle and all the more insidious for that.

"You used your charm on the boys in order to groom them."

Judge Challinor said no force was ever used against the victims but he would tell them they were being "silly" if they resisted his advances.

The three victims had the added ordeal of giving evidence at a trial earlier this year, at which Norford, of Elmbridge Road, Perry Barr, was found guilty of five charges of indecent assault.

Evidence

Judge Challinor said one of the victims in particular had "suffered a great deal" as a result of the abuse.

A second was "clearly very embarrassed" to have to come to court and give evidence.

"He looked ashamed", said the judge. "You represent a real danger to young boys and you continue to maintain your innocence."

Judge Challinor commended the three victims for having the courage to report the abuse to police and to give evidence

He said: "They and their families must not feel any shame about what happened.

"They were manipulated and deceived by a paedophile who as a result of their courage will not be able to abuse children."

Mr Earl Pinnock, defending, said: "He has lost his reputation as a teacher and was held in some good regard.

"For the teacher of young children, this was a significant breach of trust."

The barrister added: "He has a problem and to some extent is still running away from his responsibilities. He's a man who is still in denial."

Janice Bryan and Councillor David Hosell in front of the repaired aqueduct

Dripping aqueduct finally gets a gutter

A LEAKING canal aqueduct has been fixed following years of delays and threats of legal action.

British Waterways has constructed a temporary guttering system to stop most of the water dripping from the aqueduct in Great Barr.

Sandwell Councillor David Hosell, who covers the Newton ward, said: "This has been an ongoing issue for a decade."

The leak at the Tame Valley Canal Aqueduct over Spouthouse Lane was caused by a deterioration of the clay lining of the structure.

People living nearby have complained for years about the danger the dripping water has created, with people slipping as a result.

Recent severe weather compounded problems, causing icy pathways and huge icicles to hang off the aqueduct.

But with a trickle of water still leaking, the temporary repair is not an entirely satisfactory solution.

Retired grandmother-of-five Janice Bryan, who lives off Spouthouse Lane in Ennerdale Road, said: "We have campaigned long and hard to get this sorted.

"And while this is an improvement, it is not the answer."

Tragic death of a gentleman

A 71-YEAR-OLD man died after being hit by a car as he crossed a road in Oldbury.

Brian Metcalfe was hit by a vehicle which failed to stop.

He was crossing Dudley Road on his way to The George pub, just after 11pm on Friday night.

Customers ran out and an ambulance was called but he was pronounced dead.

The former landlord of nearby pub The Jolly Collier was thought to have been returning from a cashpoint.

Arrested

The driver of a Nissan Micra which failed to stop was later arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving.

A woman, 32, was released on bail.

Staff and locals paid tribute to "Welsh Brian".

The George's landlady Lorraine Riese said: "Brian worked away in the week, for the RAF, but would come in at the weekend for his half of Carling.

"He was a real gentleman, always smartly dressed, and always had time for everyone."

At the Jolly Collier, near Mr Metcalfe's family home in Junction Street, Mandy Fanthom said: "He was always so smart, a genuine gentleman.

"He will be missed by a lot of people."

Family members were too upset to talk to the press.

Police say anyone with information should call the collision investigation team on 0345 1135000.

Brian Metcalfe, aged 71

Raid on McDonald's

FOUR masked raiders armed with a crowbar and an axe robbed a packed McDonald's restaurant in Smethwick at teatime on Monday.

Terrified customers watched as the gang burst into the branch in Cape Hill and forced their way into a back office while a cash collection was taking place. They threatened staff with the crowbar and axe before escaping with a large amount of cash.

Detectives believe the gang was loitering in the area for some time before pouncing at 5.15pm.

Detective Constable Simon Pittaway saidy: "The nature of this robbery suggests that the offenders had been in the area some time before striking, as they quickly arrived at the scene just as the cash collection was being made.

"They had the nerve to enter a restaurant at teatime, when it would have been full of people.

"As a result, there must be several people who witnessed them arriving at the scene, the robbery taking place and then the offenders leaving the area.

"We urge them to come forward and tell us what they know to help with our investigation."

No-one was injured in the attack and the raiders used a small to medium sized black car, bearing false registration plates.

The robbers all wore scarves or bandanas across their faces and were wearing black jackets.

The restaurant re-opened the following morning.

Anyone with information can call police on 0345 113 5000 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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Carer is furious at council U-turn

Report by Sarah Hazelwood

A CARER has hit back at Sandwell Council claiming they never apologised for withdrawing a £11,500 grant he used to look after his severely disabled wife.

But the council has now promised to reimburse him for out-of-pocket expenses incurred because the authority took a U-turn on his application.

Des Brown, of Tipton, said he was left out of pocket when Sandwell Council cancelled the grant application on October 1, last year, the day the money was due to go into his account.

Des Brown and his disabled wife Sharmon with the letter saying they would not be getting the anticipated financial help from Sandwell Council

The 62-year old needed the money to help look after his wife Sharmon, who he has cared for full-time for the past 19 years.

But council officers visited his apartment, in High Street, and informed him and his wife, who suffers with deafness, asthma, diabetes and a hip problem, that there had been an "error".

Back in 2009, Sandwell Council told Mr Brown he was eligible for the grant. However, a council official told Mr Brown that he should have never been offered the grant in the first place and that he was not eligible because he lives in an apartment where residents can call of the council's own carers for extra support, free-of-charge.

The money, which would have been in addition to his £43 per week carer's allowance, was budgeted by Mr Brown to help pay for services such as cleaning, cooking and escorting his 53-year-old wife to her hospital appointments.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for adult social care Councillor Linda Horton said: "We have apologised to Mr Brown and a senior manager has been out to see him and has listened to his complaint.

Evidence

"We are now waiting for Mr Brown to provide the council with evidence of payments he has made for his wife's care, which we feel is a reasonable thing to ask him to do.

"Once we receive evidence that he has paid for that care, we will be happy to reimburse him for any out of pocket costs that have arisen by him paying for that care."

Last year Cllr Horton said there had been a genuine human error adding that a reimbursement would "ensure Mr Brown was no worse off and that his wifes needs were already being met by the accommodation and support provided by the extra care housing scheme."

However, Mr Brown who said his wife's condition has worsened in the last two years, claims that they are still awaiting a reply from the council.

He also said he believed that the council's lack of understanding has caused a lot of distress for his wife.

Mr Brown claimed: "I have had no response from the council in the way of an apology or reimbursement and I certainly haven't received a visitor from senior management.

"We have been hugely let down by the council and the longer this goes on the angrier I am getting with them and their lack of care.

"When we were first told about the grant, it was a real life-line for us and we finally thought we were going to be able to get the support that we have wanted for so many years.

"And as for saying there is free support where we live, this is ridiculous because any services you require you have to pay for, so obviously we have never used them because we can't afford it."

Claiming to have made several attempts to get in touch with the council, Mr Brown added that he will not back down until he receives the apology they were promised three months ago.

Mr Brown said: "That money would have helped me care for my wife and our home while allowing me to provide some extra assistance when taking her to hospital appointments.

"My wife has been denied things because we just can't afford it. The council have caused us an endless amount of heartache and although I have receipts for everything I refuse to give them the evidence until they apologise.

"We're back to square one, with absolutely nothing. They have left us completely high and dry and I will fight this to ensure they don't do the same to anyone else."

Foster care group launch campaign

A FOSTER care agency has mounted a campaign to recruit carers from Sandwell.

Based in Dudley, the Black Country team at Foster Care Associates (FCA) is looking to find safe homes across Sandwell so that the foster children it looks after can live in happy and stable family settings.

With a current 10,000 shortfall of foster carers UK-wide, FCA is hoping its recruitment drive will help alleviate the problem across the region.

"We are seeking to recruit foster carers who have the determination, understanding and passion to foster children with challenging or offending behaviour," said Andrew Nugent, team manager at FCA Black Country.

"It can be difficult coping with the complex emotional and behavioural issues looked-after children and young people bring with them but to see them develop and achieve new goals – or just to start smiling again – is a massively rewarding experience for foster carers.

"We urge anyone to just pick up the phone and make that initial enquiry. As long as they have a spare bedroom and have the desire to make a positive and lasting difference to a young person's life, then fostering could be a rewarding career option for them."

FCA provides a 24-hour support service to all its carers. The agency's 'team parenting' framework provides expert guidance, knowledge and on-going training from a team of professionals.

Anyone who is interested in finding out more about fostering and the FCA should go online to visit the www.iwanttofoster.com website or call Freephone 0800 023 4561.

Doris is ready to serve

Doris Dawes, who is aiming to become a table tennis coach, with husband Len

GRANDMOTHER Doris Dawes is aiming to mark her eightieth year by becoming an accredited table tennis coach.

She has been teaching the sport for the last 38 years and was finally taking her English Table Tennis Association accredited coaching certificate test this week.

Doris and husband Len, aged 81, of Lichfield Road, New Invention, Willenhall, run sessions three times at week at Wednesbury's Wood Green High School.

The mother-of-two and grandmother-of-one started playing table tennis at 23 after watching her husband compete across the Black Country and Staffordshire. The pair who have a "house full of trophies" will celebrate 60 years of marriage this June, and began teaching the sport at Joseph Leckie School in Walsall.

Former Rubery Owen worker Doris said: "I love helping the young ones out. I have always been a helper but seeing so many people taking the qualification made me think, if they can do it why shouldn't I?"

Doris gave up competing after suffering a stroke 13 years ago. But a determination to get better meant that she was back teaching within 12 months.

LETTERS

Visit The Public and judge for yourself

SO John Melaire wants The Public to be closed does he?

In his letter (Chronicle, Jan 27) he derides the venue because, in his opinion, it is still not a profit making organisation. He is missing the point spectacularly.

How could a community venue be expected to "make a profit" in the first few years of it's existence? Is that its point anyway? Do swimming baths make a profit? Do local authority sports pitches make a profit? Of course not. These venues are all for the use of the people of the area.

He says that much of The Public's income has come from grants. That's the name of the game nowadays. Grants from many sources have led to the regeneration of several run down parts of Sandwell.

Has he paid money to attend the excellent comedy and music shows? Has he visited the venue when it has hosted children's music festivals?

Sandwell University of the Third Age, an organisation for older people, has built up a partnership with the Public's management to hold most of it's meetings there. There are many other facilities which can be enjoyed by retired people, including a pleasant, reasonably priced cafe. Many facilities and events are specifically for children. The staff are extremely pleasant and helpful, and are very keen to develop community links throughout Sandwell.

It really is about time that people who still criticise The Public, got up off their backsides and contributed to it's future success. It is an excellent facility for public use, not all of which will generate large profits.

One final point to the value conscious Mr Melaire. If it closed, would that not be an enormous waste of public money already spent?

Phil Page
4,Burrelton Way,
Great Barr

I AM writing in response to Mr John Melaire's letter (Jan 27) regarding The Public.

The Public is a great place and has so much to offer the local community that I don't think people realise.

Art clubs for the kids on Saturday mornings, activities galore for the school holidays, tea dancing for the older generation, interactive displays that show kids that art is not just about paintings but expressing yourself, not to mention the live music, theatre events and cinema at a very reasonable cost. It is kept spotlessly clean, has friendly staff, lovely cafe, great rest facilities, lifts for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

If it is shut down, I for one will be most upset and a little angry over the fact that it has been given should a bad reputation, not because of the service it provides to the area but because of how much it has cost to build and keep running.

Nothing but the poor press prevents people from visiting at least once.

I have been to The Public many times with my children who thoroughly enjoy visiting it regularly. I wonder if Mr Melaire has ever actually entered.

I recently held an event there. The staff were incredibly helpful and fully supported everything I wanted to achieve. My event attracted 100 people from all over the West Midlands and even two people from North Wales who came and experienced what this incredible building has to offer. Every single person left very impressed and expressed an intention to return again. The families amongst us said their children just loved it.

I want to encourage everyone – see the place for yourself and then form your own opinions. If you don't like it, fine, but you might just be surprised.

Joanne Hardy,
77 Arthur Road, Tipton

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Library is to be sold off

OLDBURY'S historic, grade II listed library is set to be sold off within weeks.

Council bosses said negotiations with a buyer are well advanced and the sale should be completed within the next two months.

The building was placed on the market in March last year, following the decision to build a new £6 million library and office block.

The library, in Church Street is just yards from the new development, Jack Judge House in Halesowen Street, which has been built on the site of the former bus station.

Sandwell Council would not confirm what the library will be used for if the sale goes ahead, or the identity of the buyer.

However the building does have "change of use" planning permission, to be converted into offices.

Sandwell Council cabinet member for jobs and economy Councillor Ian Jones said: "Negotiations with a buyer are well advanced and we hope they will be concluded within two months."

Sandwell Council announced the library would go up for sale along with two other properties, office buildings 253 High Street, Smethwick and Control House in Shaftesbury Street, West Bromwich, after deeming them surplus to requirements.

Offices

It wants to spend cash generated by the sale on revamping offices in the borough.

The library in Church Street is still open, and will remain so until the new building opens its doors in April.

A January opening date had been set for Jack Judge House but was put back due to bad weather and a fire.

The new build was hit by fire in September when flames spread through 30ft of insulation.

Seven fire engines were brought in as part of the battle to control the flames for two hours.

The new 4,306 sq ft of library will also include office space for 300 workers on the floors above.

The council is currently reviewing its library services in a bid to save £1 million a year. Closures, redundancies and reduced opening hours are options under consideration.

Reprieve for homes

RESIDENTS and staff at three Sandwell care homes set to be closed down have been told they will remain open for at least a year.

Sandwell Council is searching for a private operator to take on Grafton Lodge in Oldbury, Greenhaven Resource Centre in West Bromwich and Glebefields Resource Centre in Tipton, after plans to axe then were suspended. The first of the three was due to close this August, but the council has announced it will be at least a year before a "procurement process" will be completed.

If the authority finds a new operator, residents and workers have been told they will be able to stay on.

Plea over fly-tippers

THE owner of a West Bromwich window firm have called on residents to help prevent fly-tippers targeting land they own in Wednesbury.

Turford Bros Ltd has owned the site in Bilston Road for almost three years and intend to build housing on it. It has become a magnet for litter-bugs despite the company's efforts to keep it tidy. The company has already sent out workers to clean up the site three times over the last year and the last tidy-up saw more than 200 bottles collected.

Owner John Turford, aged 89, wants people to report fly-tippers to Sandwell Council. Call 0845 359 7501.

Plan for housing revised

REVISED plans for a housing estate in Rowley Regis have been submitted.

Developer Harron Homes Ltd has handed in fresh plans for the estate on Cardale Street, to include 28 apartments and 16 homes.

Work on the new development started in October 2007, stalled in March 2008 due to the recession but began again last year.

Temporary closures will be introduced at Cardale Street for up to 18 months to let cranes lift materials on to the site. The street will close sporadically for two days at a time. It will be closed from its junction with Park Street to Avenue Road.

Concrete

Site manager Mark Downer said this was because heavy materials including concrete floors and roof trusses needed to be moved on to the site. While closures are in place, drivers are advised to take an alternative route along Oldbury Road, Station Road and Avenue Road.

The temporary road closure order began last year and will potentially last until May 2012. For information about the work call Union Contractors Limited on 0121 7058955.

Body of man, 64, is discovered in a hole

sandwellchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

THE body of a 64-year-old man, which was found in a hole which had been dug by electricity workers, has been identified as Reginald Cadman.

Police earlier this week described his death as "unexplained" and launched a full investigation.

The body was discovered by passers-by in a hole dug by electricity workers close to a footbridge over the A41 Expressway just after 11.30pm on Friday.

Police officers tried to resuscitate Mr Cadman while waiting for an ambulance. However he was pronounced dead at hospital.

A post mortem examination was carried out but the results proved inconclusive. Further tests were being conducted.

Detectives in charge of the investigation are appealing for witnesses in the area to come forward.

Detective Inspector Derek Packham who is leading the investigation, said: "We are appealing for anyone who was in the area around the time the man's body was discovered to get in touch with us.

Information

"We are particularly keen to hear from a man and a woman who were near the A41 footbridge and who helped another witness call 999.

"We would also like to hear from two young men who were in the area.

"These four are not suspects, but may have important information which may explain what happened," he added.

A forensics tent and a police cordon were set up around the scene but were removed on Sunday.

Any witnesses or anyone with any information is asked to telephone the West Midlands Police on 0345 1135000.

A police tent in over the hole in West Bromwich where a man's body was found

Reycled puppet show

Rachel Sambrooks, back and Suzan Spence get ready for their Recycled Puppet Show at The Public in West Bromwich

Soft toys rescued to star at venue

A THEATRE company will be pulling the strings when a children's show comes to West Bromwich next week.

Birmingham-based Blossom Theatre is due to perform their Recycled Puppet Show at The Public, featuring a weird and wonderful cast made entirely from recycled materials.

Performances take place on Friday, February 11, and Saturday, Feb 12, preceded by puppet-making workshops for youngsters who will be encouraged to create their own cuddly puppet using their old socks.

Castle

Each creation will then be invited to join in the production and feature alongside leading puppet duo Doug and Belinda on their magical journey to the Castle of Dreams.

Rebecca Sambrooks, Blossom Theatre founder, said: "Everything in this show is made out of recycled materials, including the main stars, who were sad soft toys lost in the back of a charity shop bin liner.

"The hands-on workshops are an exciting build up to what is a really fun and engaging performance."

On the Friday workshops take place at 1pm and 6pm with performances following at 2.15pm and 7.15pm. The following day workshops will be at 2pm and 6pm, with performances at 3.15pm and 7.15pm.

Linda Saunders, managing director of The Public, added: "The Recycled Puppet Show is a really exciting and unique concept which provides the opportunity for families to come along and be creative in a fun and safe environment."

Tickets for the performance and workshop are £6 in advance, £4 for concessions. A ticket for a family of four costs £15 for any adult/child combination. For more information visit www.thepublic.com website or call 0121 533 7161.

Eight dogs seized in police raid

POLICE have seized eight banned dogs following a raid in Handsworth Wood.

The dogs, believed to be pitbulls, were found at an address in Church Lane. Police had been tipped off by a member of the public and along with specialist police dog handlers raided the property on Friday morning.

Pups

Inside they found a bitch nursing six pups, are believed to be three weeks old, and a male dog in an outside building.

The animals, banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act, were taken to secure kennels to undergo DNA tests to scientifically prove that they are pitbulls. If the results are positive all eight will be humanely destroyed.

Road restrictions bid to stop the kerb crawlers

A ROAD will be made one-way and speed bumps and tables costing £60,000 will be installed in a bid to stop to cut kerb crawling in Bearwood.

Council bosses have begun consultation on the scheme in part of Bearwood that has a prostitution problem.

Police and residents hve called for action because of drivers pulling up and propositioning women.

Under the plans, Drayton Road will be made one-way from its junction with Poplar Road to its junction with Sandon Road. Three flat road bumps will be built on Drayton Road, Poplar Road and Anderson Road, while two speed tables will be built at Poplar Road's junction with Anderson Road and Poplar Road's junction with Drayton Road.

Councillor Derek Rowley, Sandwell's safer neighbourhoods chief, said: "We have had a number of requests to carry out this work by the police, local ward members and residents in a bid to curb a prostitution problem that is affecting the area."

Neighbourhood sergeant, Paul Shannaghan, said: "There are a number of proposals that have been discussed to try to eradicate problems with prostitution in the area around Poplar Road and Sandon Road in Bearwood.

"Amongst the proposals are making some local streets one-way to traffic, placing restrictions on vehicles stopping or parking, and installing speed control measures.

"These measures, when combined, are aimed at disrupting traffic using these streets for non-essential purposes, which will hopefully make life better for residents."

Thieves take charity box

THIEVES targeted Wednesbury Rugby Club in an overnight raid, stealing a Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal box and causing £400 worth of damage.

Yobs ripped metal shutters from over the bar area in a bid to get to the till. After failing to find any cash, they made off with the collection box believe to contain at least £150.

Rugby club president Peter Hughes said: "It was absolutely despicable act.

"This wasn't a opportunist attack – whoever did this came here prepared to break in. The roller shutters were ripped off their runners and repairing those and fire exit has cost the club around £400.

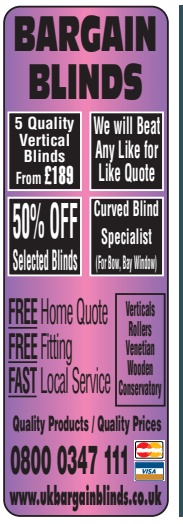
Mr Hughes said no cash was kept at the club overnight. The break-in happened in the early hours of Thursday morning, January 27.

Legend Cyrille inspires pupils

WEST Bromwich Albion legend Cyrille Regis gave an inspirational team talk as pupils at a Black Country school were awarded for their efforts.

Thirty-two year 11 students at Castle High School in Dudley were handed prizes in the ceremony.

Last year the school's GCSE pass rate went up by 24 per cent – after hitting a low in 2009 when Government inspectors were called in. Deputy headteacher Roger Pemberton said the ceremony was a celebration of the school's continued improvement. He added: "We are trying to raise standards in the school and Cyrille is a very good motivator."



Driver failed to declare points

A DEBT-RIDDEN man admitted fraud by failing to declare penalty points endorsed on his driving licence when buying car insurance.

Davinder Malhotra, aged 54, of Fisher Road, Oldbury, appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court last week.

Prosecutor Mr Hugh O'Brien Quinn said Malhotra had applied for car insurance on February 18, 2009, but failed to declare previous penalty points for drink-driving and driving with no insurance. He was stopped by police for erratic driving at a later date, and the fraud was discovered when insurance documents were handed over to officers.

Depression

Miss Blondelle Thompson, mitigating, said Malhotra was in £14,000 of debt and had been taking medication for depression. She said he took care of his wife after she was involved in a car accident and suffered brain damage. Miss Thompson added: "He is trying to address the difficulties in his life. I invite the court to take a chance on him."

Malhotra, who admitted fraud by false representation, was given a 12-month supervision order and told to carry out 80 hours of unpaid work.

Judge Helen Hughes said: "This is a very serious offence. It could have resulted in you, if you had been involved in an accident, being uninsured."

Regional body dies

THE Greater Birmingham city region, formed as a fledgling authority for the West Midlands, has finally died.

The body was originally intended to swallow up the Black Country as part of a greater Birmingham city area.

The body headed by former Labour MEP Simon Murphy has been closed down following the creation of three Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS) covering the Black Country, Birmingham and Coventry.

The last rites were read at a meeting in Birmingham last week amid confusion over the roles and powers of the new LEPs.

The city region's biggest difficulty was co-ordinating the activities of seven local councils after they had even struggled even to agree on its name. Councillors now disagree about how the new LEP system would work.

Councillor Mike Bird, leader of Walsall Council, said the Black Country wanted its own LEP because it feared what would happen if it merged with Birmingham.

Day care service is withdrawn

A DAY care service for pensioners at a Black Country club was withdrawn last week in a bid to save cash.

For the past two years Sandwell Council has transported around 30 elderly people a day to The Regis in Old Hill.

It was a chance for them to have a hot meal and to socialise. The elderly people will now be taken to Manifoldia Grange in West Bromwich – an in-house extra care unit.

"Obviously the residents are very upset," said Tony Billingham who owns The Regis, in Reddal Hill Road.

Tears

"I was there the other day when social services explained to the elderly people they would not be coming to The Regis any more and many of them were in tears.

"One gentleman in his 90s thought I was someone from the council and said he did not know whether to shake my hand or wring my neck.

"Most of the elderly people that use the service live in Old Hill or Cradley Heath. They don't want to have to travel to West Bromwich every day.

"This is obviously part of the cost cutting – we are one of the casualties."

Sandwell Council broke the news on January 17.

Mr Billingham claimed elderly people would not get the same range of activities at Manifoldia Grange, such as tea dances, bingo and sing-alongs, as they do currently. He said that he is now considering an alternative day care service.

The council's cabinet member for adult social care Councillor Linda Horton said: "We believe we will be able to offer a wider range of personalised activities at Manifoldia Grange."

She says elderly people will have greater choice about how their care and support needs are met.

"Some efficiencies will be achieved through loss of rental payments and staffing rationlisation by locating the day service within an existing service provision," she said.

"All day service users will be collected and transported to the new venue at no additional cost."

"There has been extensive consultation over several months with users of the day service. A letter to each individual day service user was sent out last week to formally confirm the service is transferring to Manifoldia Grange," added the councillor.

Bank raid case starts

AN armed gang smashed their way through the rear wall of a Handsworth bank after stealing a JCB used for grave digging, a court heard.

The masked raiders, armed with sawn-off shotguns and a 9mm pistol, targeted the UAE bank in Handsworth, Birmingham, after robbing, kidnapping and tying up three cemetery workers, the city's Crown Court was told.

Andrew Lockhart QC opened the case against five people.

The Crown alleges that Luke Daly, 26, Tracey Codrington, 44, Wesley Stewart, 61, Norman Grant, 44, and 30-year-old Aaron Hamilton formed a joint enterprise.

Deny

All the defendants deny six counts of possessing a firearm at the time of committing an offence.

Codrington, of George Street, Handsworth; Grant, of Birchfield Road, Perry Barr; Stewart, of Galton Close, Pype Hayes; and Hamilton, of Cooksey Road, Small Heath, all deny two counts of robbery.

Grant, Stewart, Daly and Hamilton have pleaded not guilty to three charges of kidnapping.

Daly, of Holly Park Drive, Erdington, Birmingham, denies involvement in the robbery at the cemetery but has admitted robbing the UAE bank.

The trial is expected to last for several weeks.

Ramble on

SANDWELL Ramblers go for a nine and a half mile walk in the Pattingham area on Sunday. Call (0121) 588 5068.

Police concern over bid to fence off park

sandwellchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

THE installation of £50,000 fencing around a park in Wednesbury could drive anti-social behaviour on to the streets of the town, says a senior police officer.

Residents and the Friends of Brunswick Park group have landed funding to secure the park, which has become a magnet for yobs.

They want to see it locked up at night in a bid to curb trouble but police fear it could lead to an increase in trouble on residential roads instead.

The fencing is due to be installed next month. It will add to £100,000 of fencing that is being erected around neighbouring Wood Green Cemetery. It is also proposed to install lockable gates.

Fencing around the park was taken down years ago but is set to return after appeals from nearby residents.

But Inspector Dale Randle of Sandwell Police is not so sure it is a good idea.

He said: "There have been some concerns raised with the different agencies and organisations due to whether that is going to be conducive or not to what we are trying to achieve around anti-social behaviour.

"All I am interested in is what is best for the local community.

"If we have no access then clearly the young people are going to have to hang around somewhere, so the effect will be that the anti-social behaviour will get spread out on to the streets.

"We understand that they want it fenced, we don't have any real objection about the fencing going up as long as the facilities within the park are still open to young people."

However, Wednesbury South Councillor Olwen Jones, who is also vice chairman of the Brunswick Park User Group, said every effort would be made to install the fencing, which was promised to residents during the election campaign.

Disquiet

She said: "We have made promises to the people of Wednesbury and we have made those promises very clear and what we do is keep those promises. Those were election pledges.

"The disquiet that we have regarding the comments made by the police, with respect to the park fence, is something that the local members are concerned about at this late stage when all the plans and costings have been made and it is ready to start in March. We are at a loss with the police, who have for many years supported us."

Thieves damage headstones

Warden June Beighton assesses the damage at St Peter's Church

THOUSANDS of pounds of damage has been caused at a Black Country church after vandals ripped off roof tiles and damaged headstones.

Metal thieves are thought to be responsible for the destruction at St Peter's Church in Greets Green, West Bromwich. The church in Whitehall Road is now facing a £15,000 repair bill.

Warden June Beighton, aged 61, said: "They got on to the porch roof at the entrance to the church and pinched the cast iron piping.

"They have kicked the coping stones and then they have got on to the church roof and kicked some more stones off, that have landed on the remembrance garden and have smashed the granite stones that have ashes underneath them."

Anyone with information should contact officers at West Bromwich police station on 0345 113 5000.

Exhibition will be out of this world

DALEKS, a Tardis and Star Wars characters will feature in a science fiction exhibition coming to Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery next week.

"Out of this World…an exhibition bigger on the inside" opens at the Holyhead Road venue on February 8 and runs until June 18

There will be life-sized daleks and lots more science fiction memorabilia from the BBC and others. Visitors will also see toys and posters from favourite sci-fi TV shows and movies, whilst youngsters can enjoy quizzes and trails inside the gallery.

The exhibition is part of a Parallel Universes, joint venture with The Public in West Bromwich town centre which will also be hosting an exhibition entitled "Out of this Universe…the power of invention" from April 6.

To run alongside the free exhibitions, Sandwell Museums will be organising a series of events starting on February 22 at the museum with the chance to meet a dalek and see some explosive 'mad science', between 10am and 4pm. For more information call 0121 556 0683 or visit the www.sandwell.gov.uk/museums website.

Man faces drugs and gun charges

A SMETHWICK man has appeared before magistrates charged with gun and drugs offences.

Wesley Harris, 23, of Cambridge Road, appeared at Warley Magistrates Court charged with possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence and possession of a Class A drug.

It follows his arrest in Overend Street, West Bromwich, last week.

Harris was remanded in custody and will appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on April 22.

Bus crash man is banned for a year

A SMETHWICK man who crashed into a bus after speeding in Walsall has been banned from driving for a year.

Mohammed Azeem Khalid was driving on West Bromwich Road when he hit the Travel West Midlands vehicle. The 22-year-old of Waterloo Road, Smethwick, was travelling in the opposite direction when the accident happened on May 25. Three passengers suffered minor whiplash.

He was convicted at Walsall Magistrates' Court of driving without due care and attention and was given nine penalty points, which under the "totting up" procedure, meant a 12-month disqualification. He was sentenced in his absence.

The court was told he claimed a passing motorbike caused him to lose concentration.

Magistrates also imposed a £525 fine, £85 costs and £15 victim surcharge.

Victorian garden talk

MR John Page will give a talk on Victoria Gardens at the meeting of Sutton Coldfield and District Gardeners Mutual Improvement Society on February 15 at Wylde Green Community Hall in Emscote Drive.

Admission is £4 on the door for the 7.30pm talk. Call (0121) 384 2920 or (0121) 354 5342 for details.

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Face of drug importer is revealed

Jailed – Robert Elburg

THIS is the first picture of a Dutchman who was last week jailed for seven years after being involved in the importation of class A and B drugs into West Bromwich.

Robert Elburg was arrested last summer when he went to collect boxes supposedly containing advertising leaflets from freight forwarding firm Gondrand UK in the Hill Top Industrial Estate, West Bromwich.

Firm representatives became suspicious and alerted customs after Elburg, calling himself Mr Clark, rang repeatedly to check progress.

Elburg had denied importing 3,500 ecstasy tablets, 360 grammes of crystal ecstasy, 100 kilogrammes of cannabis and amphetamines on July 27 but was found guilty by a jury after a trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court and jailed last week

Detectives welcomed the sentence and Detective Constable Hugh Nelson from force CID said he hoped it would act as a deterrent to other criminals.

Elburg, aged 52, of no fixed address, had faced five counts of fraudulent evasion of a prohibition on the importation of goods – four on July 27 and one on July 16. The jury returned a majority verdict of guilty to four of the counts. He was acquitted of a count of importing cannabis.

He claimed he did not know the cargo he was collecting contained drugs. He said he was approached by two men in Holland and asked to make the delivery. He claimed they told him to fly to the UK, collect items from West Bromwich and deliver them to a property in Manchester.

DC Nelson added: "Police are pleased the courts have given this lengthy prison sentence, which follows excellent investigative work between police and Customs and Excise officerss." Judge Helen Hughes said when sentencing Elburg: "Everybody in this court room is aware of the difficulties that are experienced in this country as a result of widespread drug use, not only on the users of those drugs but on society as a whole."

Dog walker's attack ordeal with pitbulls

A PENSIONER attacked by dogs at a Great Barr beauty spot has spoken about his terrifying ordeal.

In the attack at Queslett Nature Reserve, the 70-year-old was bitten on his face and hands while walking his own six-year-old Siberian husky, Tess.

A pit bull terrier and bull terrier-type dog badly mauled Tess.

Reliving the attack the victim, who asked not to be named, said: "Tess was sniffing in some long grass when we caught the eyes of these two dogs. They dashed about 50 of 60 yards and attacked her. I tried to keep them off but was bitten in the process.

"Then two teenage lads appeared from round the bushes and managed to get them off."

The OAP needed hospital treatment on his hand after the January 9 attack.

Tess had a large, deep stomach wound and needed two operations.

"She has been crying a lot since it happened. It is very sad," said the senior citizen.

Just days before a dog walked by a younger man in the reserve was attacked by two terrier-type dogs but less seriously hurt.

Tess had serious bite marks after a rottweiler attack in an almost identical spot in September 2009 and again by a rottweiler in October 2009.

Muzzled

"All bull-terrier dogs should be kept on leads and muzzled," said Tess's owner, who lives in Great Barr.

Reserve chairman Keith Linnecor urged people to beware and report anything suspicious to police.

The men involved in the latest dog attack were white and aged in their early 20s. One had short dark hair, was of medium build, and about 5ft 7ins. The other had short, light ginger hair, was of medium build, and about 5ft 9ins.

The cross bull terrier was black, grey, and white and the pit bull all white.

Anyone who can help identify the dogs' owners should call 0845 113 5000 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Patient fall bill for NHS

THE NHS trust that runs Sandwell and City hospitals has forked out more than £100,000 in seven months over falls by patients.

Patients falls cost Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust £115,000 between April and November last year.

A report to the trust board, meeting at City Hospital, said that the annual cost of falls to the NHS is estimated at £15 million.

The National Patient Safety Agency found that in an average 800 acute bed hospital trust, there will be around 24 falls per week. It added: "The estimated cost of falls within Sandwell and West Birmingham hospitals using the NPSA cost calculator for the period April 2010 to November 2010 is is £115,054."

The report says the highest number of injuries was caused to those aged between 71 and 84, with 74 injured, while 43 people aged under 70 were injured.

Cuts will hit those in debt, says boss

sandwellchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A THOUSAND residents in Sandwell will miss out on vital debt counselling if Government funding is cut and jobs are lost, the boss of the borough's Citizens Advice Bureau has warned.

Counsellors are dealing with £40 million of debt in the borough every year and give advice to around 1,000 residents.

However, a third of workers at the Citizens Advice Bureau have now been issued with letters informing them they are at risk of redundancy.

Specialist

John Davies, chief executive officer of the Sandwell bureau, has warned that hundreds of residents could sink further into debt if the posts are removed and they do not have access to specialist debt workers.

A total of five full-time workers, as well as two full-time and one part-time administration staff, are expected to go in Sandwell if the Government-funded Financial Inclusion Fund – which pays for the posts – is cut in March. Out of 60 staff, 23 people have been sent letters asking them to consider redundancy.

Mr Davies said: "The Financial Inclusion Fund pay for a team of specialist debt workers who between them see 1,000 new people a year.

"Dealing with debt has been problematic for a good few years, but over the last two to three years they have dealt with on average around £40m a year."

In Sandwell the fund pays for four extra debt counsellors at the bureau and one at probation services in Unity House, West Bromwich.

Mr Davies added that general bureau staff would not be able to take on the workload left by the specialist advisors, leaving people without a specialist service at a time when the organisation is dealing with more enquiries than ever.

He added: "Clients need the help of specialist debt workers, and if we lose the Financial Inclusion Fund on March 31 there will be a thousand appointments that will not be available."

John Davies, chief executive at Sandwell CAB, fears people will be plunged further into debt if they lose specialist help with financial problems

Council house rents go up by average of £260

RENTS for Sandwell's 29,000 council houses are set to go up by around seven per cent.

The move will see average rents increase from around £72 a week to £77, a rise of £260 a year.

The rent hike – almost twice the rate of inflation and coming on the heels of the VAT increase – has led to fears it will hit families already struggling to cope with increasing living costs. Bills will go up from October.

Councillor Mary Docker, deputy leader of Sandwell's opposition Conservative group said: "Obviously I am aware that the council needs to raise funds.

Blamed

"But taking into account areas they have already cut, with jobs going and recruitment at a standstill, I wouldn't have thought it was appropriate to increase rents at the present time."

Councillor Simon Hackett, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for housing, has blamed central Government for the increases, claiming the authority must put rents up or faces being fined.

He said: "Rent increases for council housing have to follow Government guidance or else the council and its tenants are heavily penalised financially.

"Government guidance is that rents are expected to increase by around seven per cent and we have to follow that or else the council will have money taken away and this will hit tenants in future years.

"In Sandwell we don't increase our housing rents until October, so our tenants won't be faced with any increase until then."

Health centre delay

THE opening of a long-awaited Great Barr health centre has been put back two months.

The revamp of the Tanhouse Community Centre into a clinic was due to be completed this month but the opening date of the Hamstead Road centre will now be in March after structural problems were discovered in the roof.

Councillor Ann Shackleton said: "A minor structural problem was discovered in the roof. That is being addressed at no extra cost but it has delayed the contract by two months. "

Government sits on cellar full of expensive wine it could sell, says town MP

THE Government is sitting on a wine cellar worth tens of thousands of pounds, an Black Country MP has revealed.

Labour former minister Tom Watson has asked the Government to reveal its wine list for more than 13 months but his requests have been rebuffed.

The West Bromwich East MP was this week finally handed the list which includes a bottle of Chateau Petrus 1978 worth more than £2,500.

Next to a bottle of Chateau Latour 1955, worth about £1,000, is the note: "Drink on v. special occasions. Spectacular: no need now to hasten rundown of tiny stock."

And a Chateau Margaux 1961 was described – apparently by an unnamed prime minister – as "silky".

But Mr Watson said the most valuable wines should be sold off as part of an effort to cut the Government's deficit.

He said: "They should sell the good stuff to make ends meet.

Recession

"As the economy heads back into recession nobody will believe that we are all in this together when ministers are quaffing wines at £200 a bottle.

"It has taken over 13 months to wrench this database out of the private ownership of Whitehall mandarins and in to the open for the public to scrutinise.

"David Cameron says he wants us to live in the new age of transparency – he's failed the test on this one."

Property repairs firm crash costs 71 jobs

A TOTAL of 71 staff have lost their jobs after Tipton property and construction firm Image Styles group went into administration.

The company carried out refurbishment and property maintenance and repair work – including painting and decorating, plastering and extensions, for customers including Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton councils and construction companies Taylor Woodrow and Thomas Vale.

The group is made up of three subsidiary companies – Image Styles Property Services Ltd, Image Styles Insulations Ltd and Image Styles Decorating Ltd.

In total, it employs 95 people.

Nine people have been made redundant in property services, 28 people in insulations, and 34 people have been made redundant in decorating.

Workers outside the firm in Sedgley Road West last week said they were called into a meeting in the boardroom to be told the news.

Family

Father-of-four Steve Cole, aged 54, of Reddal Hill Road, Cradley Heath, was a painting and decorating supervisor and the firm's longest serving employee, working there for 31 years.

He said: "I am disappointed and surprised.

"This firm has been like a family to me."

The company directors were not available for comment and calls were referred to administrators.

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Rocker swapping his guitar for a set of golf clubs

KK Downing in his Astbury Hall home in Shropshire

Judas Priest – guitarist Glenn Tipton, vocalist Rob Holford and KK Downing – enjoyed huge success during the 1970s and 1980s

Judas Priest's Ken Downing is as passionate about his golf as he is about his music. JAMES FISHER meets him at his developing Astbury Hall resort

IT will be an emotional farewell for heavy metal fans when Ken Downing hangs up his plectrum after completing his final world tour.

Known to fans all over the world as a founder member and lead guitar player of Judas Priest, KK – as he is called in rock circles – is ready to leave his Shropshire home on one last tour.

But aside from the planning and preparation that goes in to a world tour, West Bromwich-born KK is also opening what he hopes will become one of the country's most prestigious golf resorts at his home in Astbury Hall, near Bridgnorth.

"We want to turn it into a really nice food and beverage destination, as well as a golf resort," said KK.

"Troon Golf, one of the world's leading golf management companies, wants to be involved, which is really exciting."

Inspired by Jimi Hendrix during his teenage years to pick up a guitar, KK has built a hugely successful career making music, but how did golf enter his life?

"Golf just started off as something to do – but you end up getting hooked!

"When you're touring you spend a lot of time in your hotel but when you play golf you end up seeing more of the world.

"We used to get taken to some unbelievably beautiful places."

PGA qualified golfer Philip Henderson from Troon Golf is helping Astbury get off the ground.

The renovation is finished and the final touches will be completed before the start of the new golf season.

"Before I really got into music I was an apprentice chef at the Littleton Arms Hotel, in Hagley. "I have always been interested in food – it wasn't an easy decision choosing music.

Fantastic

"We hope to have all the rooms finished by April 1, when the golf season starts again.

"We are offering complimentary golf during the winter season for anyone who signs up and the course is always in fantastic condition."

After moving into Astbury Hall in 1985, KK bought the remaining estate three years later but a heavy workload meant he couldn't put his vision into practice until 2001.

"The full 18 holes are open now on both sides and full membership has just kicked off.

"We are also looking at developing secondary holiday homes.

"We've already held a Lord Taveners Charity event and next we are welcoming Church Stretton golfer Jonathan Gidney, a local lad who only turned pro this year, who is also holding an event here for Breast Cancer Awareness."

With the golf venture at the early stages KK hopes to pop back during the tour, which starts in June, but admits there are plenty of people looking after his interests. Alongside the nostalgia that is bound to attach itself to a swansong across the globe, KK says the usual feelings will still be running through his mind.

"Touring can be a love-hate relationship because when you're on the road at times you're thinking you just want to be back home, but then you catch the bug to do it all again.

"We would be lying if we didn't say age was a factor in our decision to make this our last. By the time we finish all of us will be in our early 60s.

"I think the nature of the beast with Judas Priest is our high energy, which brings forward that rip-roaring sound. It will be nice to be remembered for that.

"The tour won't finish until late 2012, so we wouldn't be thinking of another tour until 2014 and then you're talking about things you cannot guarantee."

Priest remain as popular today as they did during the '70s and '80s, so what's the secret of their longevity?

"It's the nature of rock 'n' roll – there's something in our mentality that says to us we haven't aged a day!

"We still walk around in tight pants and have long hair. We will deny age until we cannot deny it any longer!

"Priest was the first metal band to hit the States and the first to wear the leather and the studs. That really came to the forefront during our British Steel album.

"I think fans liked the way we were delivering the music – and they still like it.

"We went on to have bands supporting us like Iron Maiden, Saxon and Def Leppard – the next thing you know there's this huge metal scene.

"I have to say I was born at the right time because before I could even play guitar I was a big fan of all the festivals, getting to see all those great bands."

One of Priest's most recognisable sounds became the duelling guitars of KK and Glenn Tipton, revolutionary for the time.

"We originally started as a four piece band but even then we were considered too heavy. Gull Records showed us some interest but they had seen so many bands playing the same way. They asked us to add a piano player but I said there was no chance of that happening, but then I thought a second guitarist would be cool as we could work on trade-offs and harmonies.

"It revolutionised the industry because now it's seen as normal to have two guitar players."

How would KK sum up his feelings about his life and his affection towards his fans?

"It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to be part of the evolution of music. During my years of touring there's nothing that stresses the passion of a fan more than seeing one watching a metal band they like."

Ken will be hoping to spend more time on his golf course after his band's farewell tour

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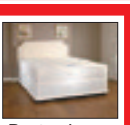

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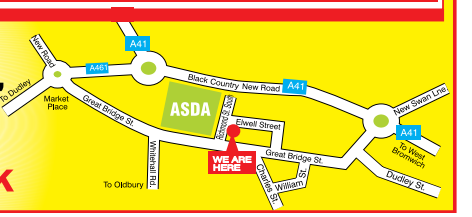

Warning that care home closure will cost more in the long run

CLOSING a West Bromwich respite care home to save money could cost the public more in the long run, it has been claimed.

Council-run Warstone House is facing closure due to high running costs faced by Sandwell Council, which is attempting to save £75 million over the next four years.

The home, in Salters Lane, provides respite care for people with learning difficulties, to give unpaid carers – often family members – a break. Under a new system, families would get payments to organise their own respite care.

But users of the service claim personalised budgets will be more costly.

Sally Harvey, chairman of governors at Oldbury College of Sport for the past 25 years, uses Warstone House for her 35-year-old son Hanif Mann-Harvey, who has not been able to walk, talk, or sit up without help since the age of four.

The grandmother-of-six, aged 59, said: "When I heard they might close it, it almost stopped my heart. I can't describe the despair.

"I use it for two weeks a year and it's only during those two weeks I do the normal things in life – see my grandchildren and friends without being ready to care for Hanif at all hours.

Quality

"And it doesn't make sense to close. Surely it will be more expensive. I'll have to do renovations to my house for people to provide the same quality of respite care there. And I'm sure it would not be safe unless there were at least two people to care for him. It would make the amount of money for personalised budgets unrealistic."

Joan Dearn, of Pearson Street, Old Hill, uses respite care for her son Ian, who is blind and autistic, as well as daughter Charlean, aged 29, who has Down's Syndrome.

Mrs Dearn, aged 67, said: "We're going to lose a lot of carers who really know how to look after people."

Sandwell Council said 70 people with learning disabilities used the facility, for different lengths of time, and 31 staff are employed.

The council is consulting on plans to close. The authority said it would work with with staff to look at redeployment and voluntary redundancy where possible.

Residents show their delight at getting their proper marked parking bays. From left to right Bob Moran, aged 82, Kath Gil,l 77, and Geoff Hesson, 69

Residents get parking bays after 10 years campaigning

RESIDENTS in Wednesbury are to get new parking bays after a 10-year battle.

The flats are situated around a cul-de-sac circle and the lack of markings mean some drivers park inconsiderately.

One resident even resorted to painting his own white lines on the road two years ago but Sandwell Council sent someone to remove the markings.

Now, following 10 years of campaigning by residents, the authority has agreed to paint eight designated bays.

"I am absolutely delighted," said Wednesbury councillor Elaine Costigan, who called on the council to create the bays. "It's taken a long time but I'm very pleased for the residents of Pine Avenue."

Sandwell Council has previously turned down requests for bays because they said it would stop lorries being able to turn in the circle.

Great grandfather-of-one Bob Moran, who is 82 and has lived in the road for 11 years, said: "It is great. We have been asking for this for years. We have been chasing and chasing and now we finally have them."

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Ref Lisa blows whistle on men-only myth

AN up and coming woman referee from Sandwell says the notion of football being a men-only game could not be further from the truth.

Lisa Rashid from Great Barr, has just taken on the role of assistant referee for Fifa and says while she does take criticism from men on the pitch, it is nothing she cannot handle.

The 23-year-old, who started officiating at the tender age of 14, said: "We get just as much as stick as the men do. In every game you know decisions are going to be challenged.

" We probably get less abusive language and have never had any physical abuse.

"You get the odd comment but I'm not interested. I just brush it off.

"Occasionally if they say something funny I may have a little laugh to myself.

I still see some of the guys. I used to referee at Sunday league level around my area and most of them are really supportive."

Villa

The middle child of three girls, Miss Rashid says she is like the son her father, Abdul, never had.

She said: "My dad worked as a commercial manager at Aston Villa for a number of years and we used to be down watching matches. At the age of 14 when most of my friends were doing paper rounds I thought 'what about being a referee?'

"Then there was an advert for a women's referee course at Birmingham County Football Association in Great Barr.

"I took that and have not looked back since. It has become part and parcel of my week."

Miss Rashid referees men's games in the West Midlands Regional League and Midland Football Alliance and the West Midlands Combination. She also runs the lines in Conference games.

In the women's game she is a Premier League referee.

Her role as a Fifa assistant referee, which was confirmed on Christmas Eve, means she can now be called to officiate matches across the globe.

Ashley Yeates pictured with disgraced TV presenters Andy Gray and Richard Keys

Foul timing for an iPhone app

A BIRMINGHAM enterpreneur is cursing his luck after developing a mobile phone application featuring Andy Gray and Richard Keys' 'funniest football quotes'.

Ashley Yeates, of Sutton Coldfield, is the brains behind the programme for the iPhone, known as an app, which features quotes from sacked Sky presenter Gray and his former colleague Richard Keys, who resigned.

Apple

Ironically, it was submitted to Apple for approval just a day before the pair hit the headlines for comments that were considered sexist about female match officials. Former Villa, Albion,Wolves and Everton striker Gray was fired for another off-air comment directed at co-presenter Charlotte Walker.

Mr Yeates, aged 40, who also owns a hair salon, is hoping the badly-timed scandal will not damage the app's prospects too much. He said: "How unlucky can you get? For this to blow up the week the app was presented – the irony's not lost on us."

The Gray and Keys "funniest football quotes" app developed for mobile phones

Lisa Rashid who has become a Fifa match official

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Postal confusion due to two High Streets

CRUCIAL bills and documents meant for families in part of Tipton are not reaching their destination because a new nearby housing estate features a road with the same name.

Residents in High Street, Princes End, say ever since the nearby Neptune Park housing estate, which features another road called High Street, was built two years ago, post is being sent to the wrong address.

Mother-of-four Gail Carr, aged 43, has lived in the older High Street for the past 25 years and said the problem had got worse recently.

She said: "I'm getting other people's statements and cheque books all the time. And if I'm getting their post, they could be getting mine.

"I've been giving the post back to the postman and he's told me it's happening a lot."

Grandfather-of-six Stan Heather, aged 67, who has lived in the old High Street with his wife Pamela for the past 35 years, said: "We have had this problem for the past two years and it's hassle we don't need.

"Our post is going to them and their post is coming to us. The postmen see the name of the road and they don't check the postcode.

"I'm regularly taking things back to the sorting office in Lower Church Lane and have complained on numerous occasions but it keeps happening.

Nightmare

"I also blame the council for allowing an estate to built that has a road with the same name as a road just round the corner."

Mr Heather said he was not sure how many documents had been lost in the past two years.

"I expect we've lost some important documents but how many we don't really know," he said. "It has been a nightmare."

A Royal Mail spokesman said: "When the new estate was first built there were some misdelivery problems as a result of these similar addresses and they were resolved.

"The local delivery manager is not aware of any further ongoing problems except for a couple of isolated incidents... due to a member of our staff being new to the area.

"However, if any customers are experiencing misdelivery problems we would like to apologise for any inconvenience and advise them to call the local delivery office on 0121 480 7860 so that they can rectify the problem."

Stan Heather, of High Street, Princes End, Tipton, ha s been getting the wrong post

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thechronicle

Stanley Wilkins, now 88, in his first car, a Singer 9 Le Mans, brought in 1941

The Singer 9 Le Mans with its blacked-out light fittings and white paint

When young Stanley was on song in his Singer Le Mans

Stanley with his photograph album of his Singer cars

Stanley Wilkins and his mother Eleanor Wilkins and his second a Singer 9

AS a teenager growing up in West Bromwich, Stan Wilkins was making a name for himself as a promising drummer with several dance bands, performing hundreds of shows round the West Midlands.

However, he thought he'd be able to get even more work if he had a car. So in March, 1940, at the age of 18, he acquired one – and not just any car either. Stan bought himself a Singer Nine Le Mans – a rather stylish open top motor which would have been considered a rival for the MG in its day.

The Le Mans was a mid-1930s, four-seater model capable of reaching speeds of 70mph – but more importantly he could fit his drums inside.

It would have really cut a dash in the wartime Black Country – and perhaps it was too flash for the policeman who pulled him over in Brierley Hill in 1941 for having no lights at night and speeding.

"I was a bit of a rebel when I was younger," recalls Stan.

His brush with the law ended with a summons to appear in court, but he met a trumpeter friend on the way to his hearing and they adjourned to a local hostelry for a drink or two.

"I was a bit merry by the time my case was called and I don't think they liked it because they fined me £2 – a pound for each offence – which was nearly a week's wages in those days."

However, his court appearance did have a sobering effect on Stan because he has only been stopped once since then in seventy years of motoring – for speeding on the Bewdley Bypass.

Lasted

At the time he bought his first car, Stan, who was then living in Price Street, West Bromwich, supplemented his drumming income with a series of part-time jobs.

He was a chauffeur for local estate agents and recalls driving along Birmingham Road in West Bromwich which used to be called the 'Monkey Run' because of all the children playing in the street.

The Le Mans lasted only a few months before he traded it in for another Singer, exactly the same but younger.

He was then called up and spent the next three and a half years in India with the RAF – "It took me three months to get there by ship – and three days to get back by plane".

By the time he was called up he was already married, at the age of 20, to his beloved wife, Joan Geddes. They remained together until her death six years ago.

After the war Stan returned to the West Midlands, gave his drum kit to a nephew (who went on to enjoy success with the pop group, the Ivy League) and then joined the GlynWed conglomerate – working his way up to run the first main frame computer system in the area.

Stan, of Holly Hedge Road, is president of West Bromwich History Society and – at the age of 88 – still likes driving his BMW 5 Series, though he no longer uses it at night.

His current car is far smoother and more luxurious than the vehicles in which he learned to drive.

"They were pretty basic in those days. There was no heater, no radiator, you had to use a starter handle and the tyres had inner tubes."

But he feels the costs of driving were lower in those days.

"You could buy six gallons of petrol for a pound, a shilling and sixpence, and insurance was less than £5 for a year."

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Jamelia

Pop star overturns motoring conviction

POP star Jamelia successfully challenged a speeding conviction proving she did not know about court proceedings because of her jet set lifestyle.

Her Audi Quattro was caught on speed camera travelling at 43mph in a 30mph zone in the city in August 2009. Notices of the offence were sent to her home in Birmingham but she failed to respond and was convicted in her absence by magistrates after failing to give information.

At Birmingham Crown Court she proved she was often away from home and did not know about the case.

The 30-year-old from Hockley, whose hits include Superstar and Thank You, said that at the time of the offence she was in America.

Jamelia, whose surname is Davis, of Barnt Green, who is the ex-wife of Walsall and former Villa footballer Darren Byfield, said she had not seen a letter about the speeding case.

Sewer block closes road

AN overnight road closure will be in place in Oldbury next week to remove a blockage in the sewage system. Motorists will not be able to access Dudley Road off Oldbury Ringway from February 7 to 28 between 11pm and 5.30am.

Homework club

A HOMEWORK club for children has been set up at Smethwick Library on Mondays, call 0121 558 0497 for information.

Passengers dismayed at loss of rail service

PASSENGERS have reacted with disappointment after it was revealed a rail service, which stopped at Tame Bridge, is being axed after multi-million pound losses.

Wrexham & Shropshire, which operates trains from Wales and Shropshire to London Marylebone, ranfor the last time on Friday.

Closure meant the loss of 55 jobs after the service had been running for three years.

Reduced

It passed through 10 stations including Tame Bridge Parkway on the Walsall-Sandwell border.

The service initially ran five times a day but dropped to four and was reduced to three last December.

Mark Fletcher, who works as an engineer in Birmingham, learned the news as he waited for a train at Tame Bridge Parkway last week.

"It is a real shame as I use this service once a month to go to London because it is cheaper than other trains," said the 40-year-old from Derby.

Former Walsall councillor and transport campaigner Richard Worrall used the service and was formerly community liaison manager for Wrexham & Shropshire.

He said: "I worked for them until August 2009 when I was told I wasn't needed as they needed to cut costs. Since then absolutely nothing was done in this area to get people to use the service."

Train enthusiast Richard Baker, aged 68, of Streetly, said: "I think it's disgraceful there is no direct service to London. It's a shame."

Lost

The company has blamed falling customer numbers for the decision.

Chairman Adrian Shooter said the firm had lost £2.8 million in 2010 and that there was "no prospect of providing a return on investment".

Among the best was not good enough

WREXHAM & Shropshire scored a remarkable 96 per cent passenger satisfaction rating, according to a study which was released on the day it announced it was ending its services.

Rail watchdog Passenger Focus said the rail service achieved the highest ratings in its survey.

A total of 31,000 rail travellers were quizzed nationwide and 84 per cent were satisfied with their journey.

The lowest ratings were given to First Capital Connect (76 per cent).

Passenger Focus chief executive Anthony Smith said: "Passengers continue to describe the vast majority of their train journeys as either satisfactory or good.

"However, breaking the National Passenger Survey results down by routes marks a huge step forward in accountability and transparency."

Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, said: "With the rug being pulled from Wrexham & Shropshire, this shows conclusively that performance counts for nothing on our railways.

"All that matters is fat company profits, regardless of quality of services and rip-off fare increases.

Children's art on show at hospital

ARTWORK by Sandwell youngsters is giving people a window on the world outside at a local hospital.

Photographs from across the borough, magazine images, maps and leaflets have been turned into a collages, which are displayed on the windows of the Birmingham Treatment Centre at City Hospital.

Children aged between 12 and 16 and members of nearby community organisations put the collages together.

Project

They did so with help from Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and nearby consultancy business Alkhami.

The project is a warm-up to the opening of the Midland Metropolitan Hospital, set to open in Grove Lane in Smethwick in 2016.

Children, the trust and local business have come together as part of an umbrella group called Art:Pulse to ensure art plays a key role in the new hospital.

MP and council bosses join students sleeping rough to raise awareness

WEST Bromwich East MP Tom Watson slept rough in the Black Country on Friday night – as part of a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of youth homelessness.

MP Tom Watson with Sarah Prescott aged 24, Regina Hase, 19 and Harj Kandola, 38, in the boxes together with, top, Jonathan Aldridge, 19, and Mark Astbury, 21

The MP swapped the corridors of the Palace of Westminster for outside at Oldbury's Warley Rugby Club to take part in the challenge, braving temperatures of -3.

He was accompanied by chief executive of Sandwell Council Jan Britton, other Sandwell councillors and a group of pupils from George Salter High School in West Bromwich.

Around 50 people took part in the challenge, organised by the YMCA, many of whom were being sponsored to take part. So far they have raised £3,500

Mr Watson said: "It has been absolutely freezing and we have had just sleeping bags and cardboard boxes to keep out the cold.

Impressed

"I am really impressed that so many people, particularly so many young people wanted to get involved."

Sandwell's housing boss Councillor Simon Hackett was among those braving the sub-zero temperature.

He has welcomed a new information website for people who are homeless or face becoming homeless after spending a night 'sleeping rough'.

Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils have teamed up to develop www.homelessblackcountry.org.

As well as housing advice, it provides a directory with details of over 250 specific services and temporary accommodation.

While spending the night in cardboard boxes, the officials talked to people about their experiences on the streets.

YMCA Sleep Easy coincided with Poverty and Homelessness Action Week.

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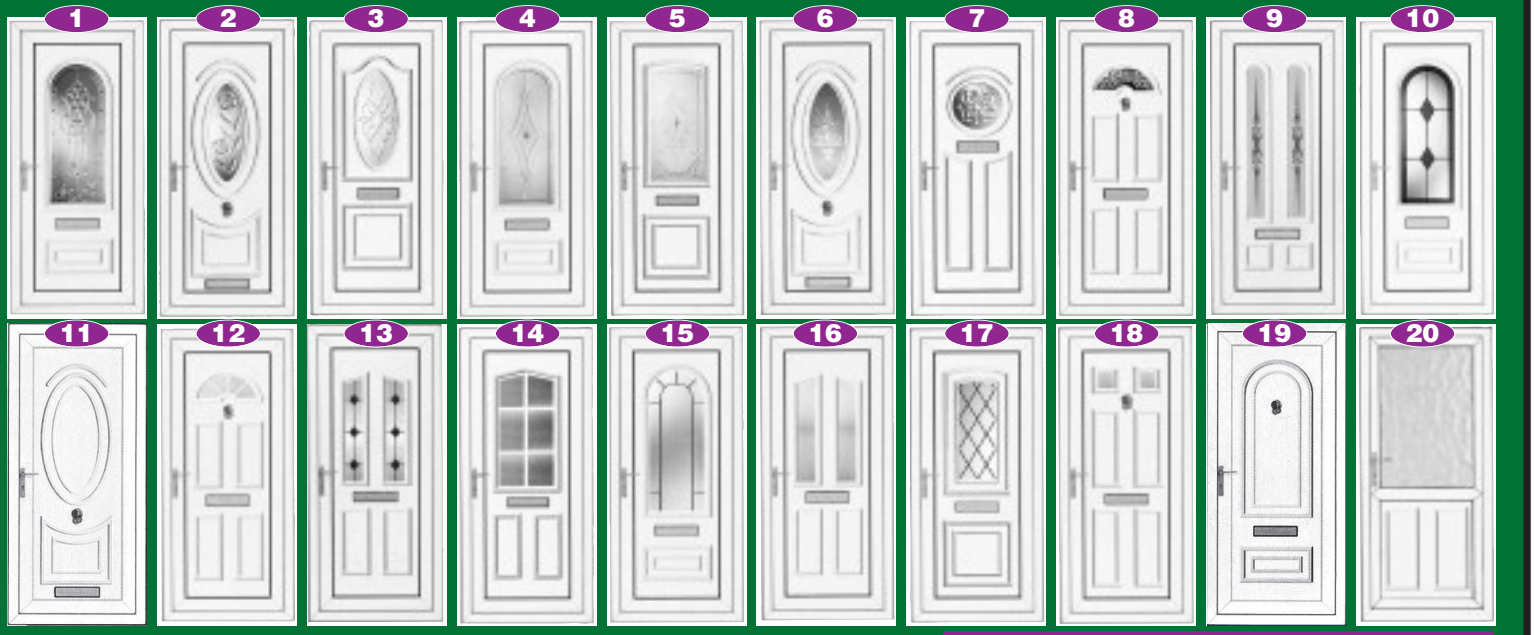

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Jean Taylor and Samantha Cannon, befriending service co-ordinator at Age Concern Sandwell

Volunteers needed to support elderly

RESIDENTS in Sandwell are being encouraged to give up their free time and volunteer for Age Concern.

The borough's Volunteer Centre in Freeth Street, Oldbury, is asking people to get in touch to find out how they can help.

Jean Taylor, chief executive officer of Volunteer Centre Sandwell, said: "There are a variety of volunteering opportunities available through organisations like Age Concern, and the Volunteer Centre can help local people decide where and how to offer their support.

Understanding

"At Age Concern Sandwell we look for empathy and understanding of older people's needs. Our visiting service is one of the many ways people can make a contribution to their community, offering companionship and support to older people who are lonely, isolated and vulnerable."

To volunteer, contact Samantha Cannon on 0121 5001860.

Alcoholic is jailed for stab attack on woman partygoer

AN ALCOHOLIC has been jailed for 12 months after stabbing a woman at a party in Cradley Heath.

Brian Ainge armed himself with 10 inch knives following a day-long drinking session.

Judge Michael Challinor told Ainge it was a "serious offence of public disorder" and stressed the use of knives on the streets would not be tolerated.

"You were not only carrying these knives but you used them on another human being," he told the 49-year-old defendant at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Julian Elcock, prosecuting, told the court Ainge got into a heated argument with victim Tania Hall at the party in Grange Road, Cradley Heath on September 3.

He said Ainge, who was clearly drunk, was shouting: "I'll get a knife. I'll stab them".

He was told to calm down but he went away only to return with a knife in each hand.

Mr Elcock said the defendant then ran at a group of people waving his arms around and Miss Hall felt a sudden "stinging" pain to her stomach.

Punched

Ainge ran off, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told, but in a second confrontation with Miss Hall he punched her in the face.

Ainge, of Crusader Close in Oldbury, admitted assault causing actual bodily harm, possessing bladed articles and affray.

He was told by the judge: "You armed yourself, approached her and you stabbed her."

Mr Ekwall Tiwana defending said Ainge was an alcoholic who had been drinking for a "considerable" time.

He had picked up the knife to frighten a group acting aggressively towards him, he said.

Sex attacker has sentence tripled

A MAN who attacked a teenager as she walked home alone at night in Sutton Coldfield has had his prison sentence more than tripled by Court of Appeal judges.

Elvis Sidaway, aged 47, was originally jailed for 15 months for sexual assault. But the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Judge, sitting with two other judges in London last week ruled his sentence was "unduly lenient" and increased it to four years.

The court heard the assault on the 19-year-old took place as she walked home after finishing work. "As she walked along the road she had the experience of a nightmare for any young woman walking home on her own," said Lord Judge.

Sidaway, from Kingstanding, who had a hat pulled over his face, jumped from behind a hedge, grabbed the teenager, dragged her into bushes, threatened her with a knife and forced her to commit a sex act. The victim, who was crying and thought she was going to be killed, later suffered nightmares.

Sidaway appeared at Birmingham Crown Court in November where he pleaded guilty to sexual assault, for which he received 15 months, possessing a blade for which he was a given a nine-month concurrent sentence which stands.

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Jake Blakesley inside the toy-grabber machine at Jitterbugs

It's a toy story for little Jake

A TOY Story-mad youngster sparked a rescue operation after following in the footsteps of his heroes Woody and Buzz Lightyear and climbing inside a toy-grabbing machine.

Intrepid adventurer Jake Blakesley, aged two, somehow squeezed into the amusement machine at Jitterbugs Party World in Great Bridge through a hole no bigger than a shoe box.

But after getting stuck inside, fire-fighters had to be called to prise off the lid and free him.

Mother Charlotte Beards with Jake and the toy tiger he got from the machine and Toy Story hero Woody

The youngster climbed in last Thursday after setting his sights on a cuddly tiger toy, which he was allowed to keep as a memento of his adventure.

Claw

Only the night before, Jake and identical twin Jack had watched their favourite film Toy Story, in which pint-sized cartoon characters Woody and Buzz escape into a toy-grabbing machine and come face to face with "The Claw".

Mother Charlotte Beards, aged 37, of Hollywell Street in Coseley, said: "We were watching Buzz and Woody the night before and he's seen them take the toys from the claw and copied them.

"He squeezed himself through the hole where you put your hand in to get the toy."

Mrs Beards, said the feat was all the more remarkable as 3'3" tall Jake had to squeeze through a hole barely one foot square. "The hole can't have been more than a size of a shoe box," she added.

More than 250 'safe places' to help vulnerable people

A 'SAFE places' scheme in the borough has been hailed a success.

Police in Sandwell have been working with partner agencies including local charity, Changing Our Lives, to develop a 'safe places' scheme for people with learning disabilities.

The scheme has been designed to help people with learning disabilities to know what to do if they become a victim of hate crime – when they are targeted because of their disability.

Each person with a learning disability carries a card which gives their name and personal contact details. Agencies, businesses and public buildings are encouraged to display the Safe Place logo and can be easily recognised by the vulnerable person.

Traininghas been given to people so they know that they can enter a building displaying the Safe Places logo to get help.

The expectation is that participating businesses and agencies can provide a temporary safe haven. Participating agencies and businesses will contact the person's family or carer or police.

There are now 282 Safe Places across the borough, including local shopss, doctor's surgeries, dentists, community centres, museums and leisure centres. To date, more than 1,200 cards have been distributed in Sandwell.

Reassure

Police Community Support Officer Sophie Trace from Langley neighbourhood team said: "This is an excellent scheme, which has been working really well. We hope that it encourages more vulnerable people in the community to get around the borough knowing that there are places they can go if they are in need of assistance. Hopefully this will reassure them and their families."

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thechronicle

More jobs are on the way at retail park

HUNDREDS of jobs are set to be created in the Black Country with the expansion of a major shopping park in Wednesbury.

The Gallagher Retail Park has filled all of its existing units and is now to build on vacant land at the site, it has been revealed.

It is hoped at least three new retailers will move into the space over the next few years, creating scores of new jobs for residents.

The park which is located near to Junction 9 of the M6 is already celebrating after filling all its units, with the arrival of retailers including TK Maxx, Outfit, Mamas and Papas and Boots.

Marston's this week announced it will open a £2.5m new pub creating up to 60 jobs and fashion store Lipsy is also set to open up there.

Mark Edwards, head of investment and development at Gallagher UK has now said the company is to invest in existing vacant land at the site.

Excellent

Mr Edwards said: "The next phase is to try and take the location forward and look to extend the location.

"We are looking around the periphery of the site where we still own parts of land that haven't been developed."

Mr Edwards said new stores could bring in several hundred jobs depending on what companies move in, but it was unlikely anyone would move into the site for at least two years.

"We can probably bring in two to three further occupiers," he added.

"We are working with relatively small parcels of land, but there is scope to accommodate two or maybe three further operators and we are working with the existing site and the tenants to make the most of what we've got."

Councillor Ian Jones, Sandwell's cabinet member for jobs and economy, welcomed the news.

He said: "This will be excellent news for Sandwell and Wednesbury. We wish them every success in their plans for expansion.

"The council is fully supportive of bringing investment into the area."

Eco bungalows to be first of many

ECO-friendly bungalows being built in Sandwell will help tenants cut their heating bills and reduce their impact on the environment.

The bungalows are being built in the Hamstead area by Sandwell Council in partnership with Black Country Housing Group (BCHG) as the first phase of housing improvements on the Durham Estate.

The four two-bedroomed bungalows are being built in Holmes Close and are the first of their kind in the borough.

Development Manager at BCHG, Rebecca Stevens, said: "As well-designed, energy-efficient properties, they will not only help tenants to cut their heating bills but also reduce their impact on the environment."

Developers Mansell Plc are building the new bungalows under the code for sustainable homes. The bungalows at Holmes Close will be the first homes in the borough to meet the 'level 5' ecological standard.

Requests

Mansells is now on site and it is anticipated that the scheme will be completed by April.

Sandwell Council cabinet member for housing Councillor Simon Hackett said: "The council has received numerous requests from people wanting two-bedroomed bungalows in the borough.

"We have responded to this and these new bungalows, which are to a very high standard, are the first of many that we hope to build across the borough over the next few years."

Police, wardens and snow see crime figure plummet

HIGH profile patrols by police and wardens in December helped Oldbury town centre have its lowest monthly crime figures since records began.

There were no recorded thefts from shops or stalls.

Total recorded crime was down 24 per cent and anti-social behaviour down 47 per cent on December 2009.

The month's crime and anti-social behaviour figures for the town were the lowest since current records began in 2002.

The crackdown was part of Operation Tinsel.

Sergeant Colin Gallier, of Oldbury neighbourhood policing team, said: "During December, we had a high visibility patrol strategy around key hotspot areas of Oldbury town centre. This strategy was aimed at reducing crime during the festive period, which historically has seen a rise in crime. The aim was also to offer visual reassurance to the public.

"Officers from the Oldbury neighbourhood team along with Sandwell Council's street wardens consistently adhered to this patrol strategy each day despite some adverse weather throughout the month.

"The operation has been a huge success, helped too, of course, by the bad weather which will have kept some people away."

Celebrating a successful crime crackdown are, from left, Tim Morgan-Fletcher, deputy manager trading at J Sainsbury, Oldbury, Parmjit Sahota, Oldbury neighbourhood manager, Sandwell Council, Cllr Steven Frear, Sgt Colin Gallier, Oldbury police, Lee Howen, Sandwell Council warden

Sgt Gallier added: "We will continue to work hard together with our partners to continue with our patrols and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour."

Tim Morgan-Fletcher, a deputy manager at Sainsbury's in Oldbury, said: "It is fantastic to see the efforts of the police, local authority and the whole community of Oldbury rewarded in the December crime figures.

Community

"As our ties get even closer, we should see this trend continue and make Oldbury a safe community for us all."

People can contact Oldbury neighbourhood policing team on 0345 113 5000 extension 7630 6818, by emailing them at oldbury@west-midlands.police.uk.

They can contact Parmjit Sahota, Oldbury neighbourhood manager, Sandwell Council, on 0121 569 3557 or contact Sandwell's anti-social behaviour helpline by calling 0845 359 7500 or emailing contact@sandwell.gov.uk.

Detour will be necessary

MOTORISTS are being warned that they could face delays when road resurfacing work is carried out in Oldbury later this month.

In order for the work to be carried out is will be necessary to close Century Road on Sunday, February 6, and Sunday, February 13.

On both days the closure will be from 8am to 4pm.

Closures

The closures will be necessary in order to carry out resurfacing work in Bromford Road, Oldbury.

Traffic will be diverted via: Bromford Road, Broadwell Road and vice-versa and Broadwell Road, Birmingham Road, Oldbury Ringway, Birmingham Street, Simpson Street, McKean Road and vice-versa.

Traffic on Bromford Road itself will be controlled by the use of Stop/Go boards throughout the duration of the works.

Access to frontages will be maintained unless it is considered unsafe to do so.

Those seeking more information on the roadworks should contact Nigel Underwood at Sandwell Council on (0121) 569 4157.

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Headteacher Mr Ian Binnie

Art lesson at Locarno

2010 was a good year for Alexandra High School. The GCSE results were very encouraging. They have improved every year over the last decade and the 2010 results put us in the top 15% of schools in the country for the progress pupils make. In the Sixth Form the pass rate for A2 was 97%, one of the best in the area. We expect the 2011 results to be even better.

Our new Year 7 seem very good and have made an impressive start to their secondary education. We are full, in fact there was a waiting list to joint the Alex. The youngsters started at the Locarno site. Year 7 and 8 are based there whilst the building work is carried out. Parents and other visitors are very impressed by the facilities there. Just before Christmas we were delighted to hear that we are one of the few schools to be rebuilt under the Building Schools for the Future programme. The work will continue until 2013 when we will have state of the art facilities on the new Alex site.

In September we had a full OfSTED inspection. The inspectors agreed that we are an improving school with many good features and were very complimentary about aspects of school life. They praised the behaviour of pupils and the relationships between them and their teachers. We continue to offer an exciting range of out of hours activities including holiday play schemes and after school clubs. We have just started a Youth Club on site which has proved to be very popular.

At the Alex we have always had an excellent record in sport for both boys and girls. Our current Year 10/11 girls netball team has never been beaten. . .ever. The Alex provides a good education for all pupils - that is fun as well!

Prospective parents who wish to visit the school should ring the Headteacher's PA Tracy Hall on 0121 522 5734

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Remains of a German Heinkel He.111 bomber shot down by Deanesley and Scott which fell on Hales Lane, Smethwick, in April 1941, killing seven townsfolk on the ground

Flt Lt Edward Deanesley and Flt Sgt Jack Scott with a 256 Squadron Defiant, built in Wolverhampton, in which they scored their first victory in the skies above Smethwick

The Duchess of Kent visits Wolverhampton Women's National Fire Service detachment

RAF aces' triumph marred by tragedy

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

ALTHOUGH the Black Country did not suffer as much as Coventry or London, or even Birmingham, during the dark winter nights of 1940-41, the Luftwaffe's bombers did bring death and destruction to the industrial towns which the Germans knew were vital to the British war effort.

But the Black Country had its own way of fighting back. On the night of April 10, 1941, Flt Lt. Edward Deanesley, son of a Royal Hospital surgeon, took off in his Wolverhampton-built Boulton Paul Defiant night fighter from RAF Tern Hill, in Shropshire. Behind him in his gun turret, nursing four BSA-made Browning machine guns, was Flt Sgt Jack Scott a New Zealander. They were vectored over the Black Country where a heavy raid was in progress. They saw one German bomber silhouetted against the large fires on the ground, but lost it.

Then, just before midnight, they glimpsed a Heinkel He.111, and Deanesley crept up on it, below and to the port side. When they were level with the bomber Sgt Scott opened fire with two short bursts, setting it alight. The Heinkel fell in flames and hit the cable of a barrage balloon and crashed in Hales Lane, Smethwick. Tragically, seven people were killed in the two houses struck by the stricken aircraft. They were unable to use the Anderson shelters in their gardens that night because they were flooded.

Deanseley landed back at Tern Hill, and Scott was commended for firing only 450 rounds to destroy the bomber, one of three brought down that night by Defiants.

Across the Black Country as the all-clear sounded, workers came out from their shelters and went back to their machines, grimly turning out munitions, and other essentials of war, their way of fighting back. In the streets the ARP wardens searched for survivors, and Fire Service, regulars and volunteers fought the flames.

When Carlton Road, Penn, was bombed, locals believed the real target was the Fischer Bearings factory, which had once been German-owned.

In the cold light of morning the day-shift workers came out of their houses and shelters, smelling smoke in the air,. Sometimes they had to find new ways to work, going around the craters and rubble, but get there they did.

The Black Country was at war, and everyone was in the fight together, whether they were fighter pilots above or riveters and welders below.

A Defiant night fighter of RAF 264 Squadron taxiing out for a sortie over the Midlands

Destruction wrought by German bombers at the Grace Mary Estate, in Tividale, above, and to Carlton Road, Penn, Wolverhampton, left, in 1940 and 1941

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Family in payout bid over Turkish holiday from hell

LEGAL action has been launched by a Sandwell family struck down by a gastric illness at a Turkish hotel.

Heather and Frederick Jones, of Tipton, her daughter Heidi Rhodes, of Wednesbury, and her three children stayed at the Holiday Village Hotel, Sarigerme, in 2008.

Hundreds of people say they suffered diarrhoea, stomach cramps and abdominal pain and are now set to claim damages.

Solicitors Irwin Mitchell claim the hotel has been at the centre of four outbreaks of illness in four years.

The company filed court papers on behalf of 337 people earlier this week.

Heidi Rhodes, an administration supervisor, and her family spent more than £5,000 on the two-week sunshine break in August 2009.

The 33-year-old mother of three said: "When we first got there it looked fantastic but after 48 hours it turned into a nightmare holiday from hell.

"I still suffer with irritable bowel syndrome today."

Heidi had severe cramps, and while her eldest child Leah Rhodes, now aged 11, escaped unscathed, her seven-year-old twins, Haydn and Chloe Collins, were ill.

Solicitors

She said she would also like to get the family's money back for their holiday.

Solicitors tried to make a settlement before pursuing a civil action against the holiday operator, First Choice.

The hotel, previously called the Pegasus Palace, changed its name in 2007.

Clive Garner, head of the travel law team at Irwin Mitchell, said: "To dismiss the concerns of so many people is nothing short of arrogant on First Choice's part, which continues to bury its head in the sand despite the countless attempts we have made to deal with this matter amicably, and out of court, ensuring our clients are fairly compensated for their losses and suffering."

He added that while 103 of the original 440 holidaymakers have accepted compensation, 337 had no option but to take action in court.

First Choice spokeswoman Louise Evans said: "Our legal team are engaged in ongoing negotiations with the law firm in order to resolve this issue amicably.

"Therefore, it would be inappropriate for us to make further comment."

Have a say on takeaways

PEOPLE in Sandwell can voice their opinions on hot food takeaways as part of a special survey into the growing problems of obesity and poor diets.

Sandwell Council has started an online survey asking people for their views on fast food and hot food takeaways in the borough.

Healthier

They will be asked to comment on a number of issues including their perceptions about hot food takeaways in the borough and how far they might walk to purchase fast food.

Sandwell Council cabinet member for jobs and economy Councillor Ian Jones, said: "With our busy lives these days, it is all too easy to forget about the healthier options and just grab a take-away.

"No one is saying don't eat take-away food. We are just trying to get the balance right between choice and availability."

As an incentive to take part in the survey, all completed entries will be entered into a prize draw with the winner will receive a month's free membership to Sandwell Leisure Trust, a £10 Tesco Voucher and a £30 Argos Voucher.

People wishing to take part in the survey should visit the webstie at www.sandwell.gov.uk/takeaways. The survey runs until March 14.

Pictured on site at The Lyng are, clockwise from left, Karen Griffin, of Sandwell Council, Adrian Farr, MD of Barratt WM, Adnan Saif, Chief Executive of Urban Living, Wendy Bodenham, Chairman of Lyng CA, and Sandwell councillor Bob Badham MBE, of Greets Green and Lyng ward
Below: work is under way

Work starts on new look for The Lyng

WORK has started on a multi-million pound regeneration project which will breathe new life into a West Bromwich estate.

The Lyng landscape is being dramatically transformed as a scheme to build hundreds of homes swings into action.

Lyng Community Association (LCA), which owns and manages 86 affordable homes on the estate, is working with Sandwell Council and private house builder Barratt West Midlands on the scheme.

The 18-acre redevelopment – which has received support and financial backing from regeneration agency Urban Living – will create 364 new homes, 114 of which will be for affordable rent through the LCA. The remaining 250 will be available for private sale.

It is hoped that the first homes will be ready for residents to move into this summer. Public open space, including a square and parks, and a new office for the LCA will also be created.

Wendy Bodenham, Chairman of the LCA, said: "This scheme has been years in the planning, so it is fantastic to see work having started on site.

"It will provide much-needed affordable homes for the area and help breathe new life into the local community.

"How tremendous it is to see plans take shape on the ground and progress at such speed."

Activity is evident on both the north and south areas of the site. Work to build a dedicated office for the community association and flats for rent in Moor Street is progressing fast, as is the construction of Barratt West Midlands' show homes in Lyttleton Street.

Councillor Simon Hackett, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for housing, said: "It's fantastic news that the Lyng regeneration project is now in the construction phase delivering one of the council's major housing initiatives that will provide high quality housing and greater housing choice.

"The project is a shining example of the council's commitment to drive forward major community-led regeneration initiatives through innovative partnership arrangements, even in the current difficult economic conditions."

Adrian Farr, Managing Director for Barratt West Midlands, said: "Now is the time local people will begin to see important changes to the urban landscape

Significant

Mr Farr said the regeneration of the estate, one of a number of significant construction projects in West Bromwich, would provide a lasting legacy for generations to come and make The Lyng an area to be proud of.

Adnan Saif, Chief Executive of Urban Living, added: "This is a fantastic example of community-led regeneration and partnership working.

"We've supported the regeneration of the area from the outset as this will not only create greater housing choice but also complement the wider revitalisation of West Bromwich town centre."

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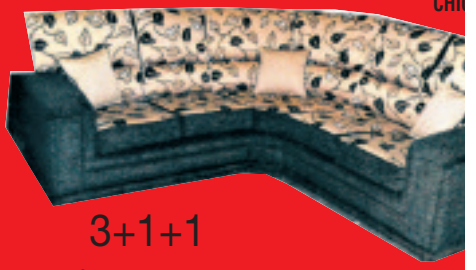

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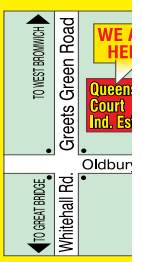

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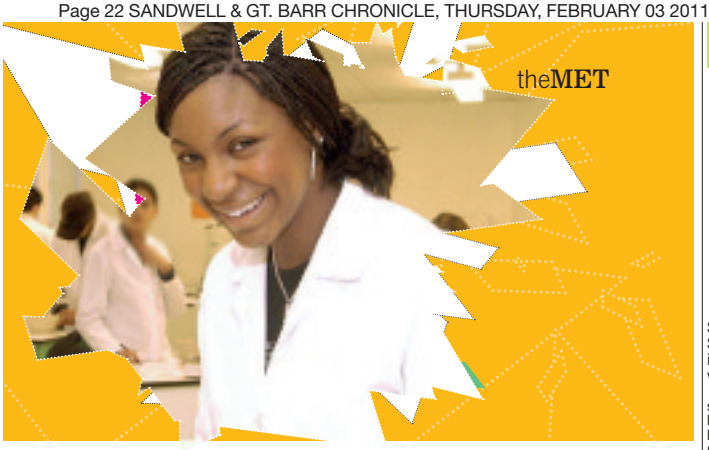

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Birmingham Metropolitan College

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Birmingham Metropolitan College runs a series of FREE careers events throughout the year. These evenings give students the opportunity to find out information about different pathways and qualifications needed to achieve their career aims.

Speakers from various related professions give an insight into their career paths, and answer questions about their own work roles.

Further Careers Events throughout the year / 7pm start

Tuesday 15th February 2011
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Tuesday 8th March 2011
IT and Computing (SC)
Tuesday 15th March 2011
Public Services (JW)
Tuesday 22nd March 2011
Engineering (JW)
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Business (MB)
Tuesday 10th May 2011
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Where the Welcombe is worthy of the Bard

WELCOMBE by name and welcoming by nature, the Menzies Welcombe Hotel, Spa and Golf Club on the outskirts of Stratford-upon-Avon is an ideal refuge in which to recover from the rigours of winter.

One of Warwickshire's premier hotels since the 1930s, the Menzies Welcombe has the traditional comforts of a country house hotel, including huge sofas in an oak panelled lounge warmed by a roaring log fire in a huge marble fireplace, fine food and drink and attentive service.

It combines this with a sparkling purpose-built spa and an 18-hole championship golf course within the surrounding 157 acres of parkland.

Not only is it a prime location in Shakespeare country, it actually was Shakespeare country as some of the land was once owned by the Bard himself.

The Jacobean style mansion was built in the Victorian era for Manchester industrialist and politician Mark Phillips, who is commemorated by a massive obelisk on a nearby hill, and it was later the home of brewer Sir Archibald Flower.

It was built as a 'Calendar House', a property with seven entrances (one for each day of the week), 52 chimneys (for each week of the year), 12 fireplaces (for each month) and 365 windows (for each day of the year). I must admit I was too busy relaxing to verify but I liked the idea that the magic numbers infuse luck and prosperity to all those who dwell within.

Beautiful grounds at the impressive Menzies Welcombe Hotel

Menzies Hotels bought the property in 2003, restoring the ornate Italian garden and building the impressive spa. The spa facilities, which are free to hotel residents, include an indoor swimming pool, open-air vitality pool, heated loungers, foot spas and a range of 'thermal experience' rooms including a Finnish sauna, steam and cool rooms, ice fountain and storm showers to invigorate.

Indoor pool and a range of 'thermal experience rooms' are on offer

Pamper

A selection of Clarins, Elemis and Gerard's treatment rooms offer a range of therapies and treatments, including massages and facials, available for an additional charge for those needing a little pamper time.

The more active can use the state-of-the-art gymnasium, aerobics studio and all-weather tennis courts, or head out on the 18-hole par 70 golf course which once hosted the European Seniors Tour.

If you want to get out and about, Stratford is only three minutes' drive away with its impressive new theatre complex for the Royal Shakespeare Company and historic houses with Shakespeare connections, plus probably the best array of shops in Warwickshire.

All this will develop an appetite. The hotel's Trevelyan restaurant (named after another previous owner, statesman Sir George Trevelyan) has two AA rosettes and head chef Robin Smith creates delicious dishes using traditional British ingredients. During my visit he created a twist on rice pudding involving apricots and caramel that was divine. There is an extensive wine list.

The hotel is a popular wedding venue and will be holding its annual Wedding Fayre on the afternoon of Sunday, February 27 (call 01789 413826).

The Menzies Welcombe is offering a winter chill-out deal until March on Friday and Sunday nights, with an overnight stay and a three course dinner, bed and breakfast for £60 per person. Book by calling 01789 295252.

Otherwise, prices start from £105 per night for a standard room or from £205 for a room with a four poster bed.

For more information visit www.welcombehotelstratford.co.uk or email welcombe.reservations@menzieshotels.co.uk

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Dudley Castle provided Robert Aston with the backdrop for his novel Jack O'Beans, which is set in the 13th century when the castle was a hive of activity

It was joining battle re-enactments by the Friends of Dudley Castle, like this one with Roger Richards, that helped Robert Aston's research

Hands-on history lesson helped author with novel

A creative writing course made Robert Aston realise he had a story. Now he has published his first book and tells **CHRIS FEEHAN** about it

Robert Aston with his book Jack O'Beans, which he hopes will give people an insight into the medieval items and attractions dotted around the Black Country and get them looking into local history

An author is hoping to capture the imagination of the Black Country with his novel that delves into the history of Dudley Castle.

Robert Aston was inspired to write after attending a creative writing course at Dudley Library and has since published his first novel, Jack O'Beans.

It is set during the 13th century in the medieval age when Dudley Castle was a hive of activity. It tells the tale of Jack, a young boy who constantly finds himself in some sort of trouble.

The 72-year-old, of Oak Street, Coseley, describes Jack O'Beans as a logical version of Jack and the Bean Stalk and believes it should appeal locally as the book is based on real historical events which took place across the Black Country.

Robert was born in Oxford but returned to his Black Country roots when he moved to Dudley to live with his grandmother in 1948.

The author says: "A Dudley based company, John Thompsons, sent me to night school once a week and I decided I wanted to become the student of the year because I'd heard it meant I'd study at Cambridge University."

He won the award and spent a term there. "The experience changed me, I went from dunce to student and I decided I wanted to become an academic," he says.

Robert went to Birmingham University, where he obtained a degree, and continued to work there are as a staff member until retirement. He then took up writing and attended the creative writing course.

He says: "It was a real eye opener I found myself on the course along with 12 women, it was there I realised everybody has a story and every story deserved to be told."

Mr Aston sent a few episodes detailing Jack's adventures to the Black Country Bugle. The tales became a frequent feature and he decided to turn them into a book.

Robert began researching Middle English and participated in battle re-enactments held by the Friends of Dudley Castle on the castle grounds.

He says: "Joining the Friends of Dudley Castle has made writing the book a lot more hands on, you can really get a feel for the castle and it is amazing how much the other members know about the castle's history.

"There are so many medieval items and attractions dotted around the area and I hope my book will give people an insight into them and hopefully get them looking into our local history."

The book is available to buy from online book stores and some local book shops.

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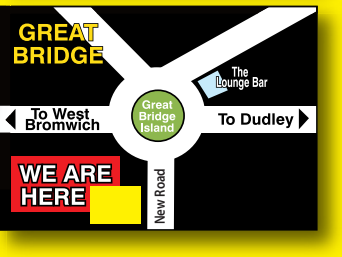

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Big voice, bruised heart – Adele's 21 has lots of soul

ADELE – 21 (XL)

TWO years on from her hit debut 19 and, as well as the key to the door, Adele Adkins will find the key to the hearts of many more music lovers with this mature and often magnificent album of bluesy soul about bruised and broken hearts.

It opens with the rolling swampy blues thump of Rolling In The Deep and the north Londoner follows it with the better-than-Duffy retro soul pop of Rumour Has It.

The first of the big ballads which dominate this album is Turning Tables. The other songs which showcase a big powerful voice that is capable of tenderness too are the country-tinged Don't You Remember, Take It All and Someone Like You.

The pace is varied with the jazz-urban flavoured He Won't Go, 80s-like rocker Set Fire To The Rain, the gospel-influenced I'll Be Waiting and a gentle version of The Cure's Lovesong transported to Copacabana for a light bossa nova refit.

Which brings us to the final number, Someone Like You, a song about someone losing their lover to someone else and accepting they'll have to make do with second best. It's shivers down the spine time, like the first time you heard Sinead O'Connor sing Nothing Compares To You or Christina Aguilera warble Beautiful. Audiences will still be asking Adele to sing this one in years to come, even if she gets around to an album called 71.

All in all, an early contender for album of the year and possibly the best British album of its type since Dusty went to Memphis.

Adele will be in concert at Birmingham's HMV Forum on April 18.

Adele's powerful emotional vocals on new album 21 recall the late, great Dusty Springfield

BRUNO MARS – DOO-WOPS & HOOLIGANS (ELEKTRA)

The 25-year-old Hawaiian has a supple soulful voice with a hint of grit, first widely heard when he guested on rapper Travie McCoy's global hit Billionaire. His debut is almost a masterclass on how to make modern pop hits, full of bright-eyed positivism surging melodies, romantic yearning vocals and crisp state-of-the-art production. Stylewise, it ranges from power ballad to gentle reggae, and guests include B.O.B, Damian Marley and Cee Lo Green.

When an album starts with two pop songs as good as Grenade and Just The Way You Are, you are hooked, even if a couple of lesser tracks sound a bit like filler.

GLEE, THE MUSIC, VOLUME 4 (SONY MUSIC)

The cult TV show about a high school singing club is back on our screens and here is a selection of songs from season two, including Glee revamps of Empire State Of Mind, Billionaire, Toxic, Forget You (with Gwyneth Paltrow!) and Valerie. Highlights include Rachel's (Lea Michele) version of Paramore's The Only Exception, Kurt's (Chris Colfer) tender reboot of The Beatles' I Want To Hold Your Hand and – step forward Mercedes (Amber Riley) and Santana (Naya Rivera) – River Deep Mountain High.

THE STREETS – COMPUTERS AND BLUES (679 RECORDINGS)

Dry your eyes, yes this is Birmingham rapper/urban poet Mike Skinner's fifth and final album as The Streets but it will not be the last we hear of him. And he ends with a strong album, filled with melodic and lyrical hooks, wit and even a hint of optimism.

Blip On A Screen is about seeing your unborn child on a hospital scanner screen ("You're growing thumbs/I'm going numb/Tucked into your mum/Looks like it could be quite fun"). There are songs about conducting relationships via Facebook and spending too much time playing console games, and a potential hit single in Going Through Hell with Robert Harvey from the Music as guest singer. Say farewell to The Streets at Birmingham O2 Academy on February 25.

JAMES BLAKE (ATLAS/A&M)

A singer-songwriter for the dubstep generation, this young Londoner creates ethereal, ghost in the machine electro-ballads epitomised by this album's opener, the effects heavy Unluck. On Unluck Blake sounds like a broken hearted robot, if robots had hearts. For all its strangeness, there is something attractive and naggingly memorable about Blake's songs. One of the more conventional songs, a cover of Feist's Limit To Your Love, has already been a top 10 hit in several European countries.

Leon Burakowski

From left, John Smith, Mike Edwards, who won best picture, and Rick Williams

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FROM canal scenes to an aerial display by the Red Arrows, keen amateur photographers in the Black Country are showcasing the best of their work.

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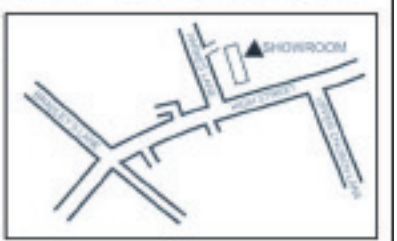

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Book and audio book reviews – page 36

YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING

Round-up of shows – page 31

Reviews and gigs – page 36

How any dream came true

Liam Gallagher leads his new band Beady Eye to Wolverhampton

Liam has his Beady Eye on city tour date

BEADY Eye, the band formed by singer Liam Gallagher and other former members of the last incarnation of Oasis, come to Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Sunday, April 24, as part of their first UK tour.

The group was formed after the exit of Liam's brother, chief songwriter Noel Gallagher, meant the end of the hugely popular Britpop band.

In Beady Eye Liam is joined by guitarists Gem Archer (ex-Heavy Stereo) and Andy Bell (ex-Ride) with drummer Chris Sharrock (ex-La's). They release their debut single, The Roller, and album Different Gear, Still Speeding, later this month.

To get a preview of the band's songs check out their website – www.beadyeyemusic.com – and for tickets, which are priced £27.50, contact Midland Box Office on 0870 320 7000 or go to www.wolvescivic.co.uk

THE DREAM did come true for Scottish singer and actor Keith Jack, despite being runner up to Lee Mead in 2007's BBCTV Any Dream Will Do search for a new West End star for Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

While Mead went on to star in the hit revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's musical retelling of a Biblical story, Jack, pictured right, joined the cast of the touring version and last year donned the coat of many colours for the first time as an official Joseph.

He will be wearing it again to celebrate his 23rd birthday while starring in the show at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from March 1 to 6.

Tickets cost from £13.50 to £26.50 and are available from the theatre box office on 01902 429212 or online at www.grandtheatre.co.uk

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the pulse

Legends over history of the Valentine card

DID you know that approximately 141 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged annually, making Valentine's Day the second most popular card-sending holiday after Christmas?

The history of Valentine's Day - and its patron saint - is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance.

St Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men - his crop of potential soldiers.

Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

Anniversary

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl - who may have been his jailor's daughter - who visited him during his confinement.

Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine', an expression that is still in use today.

Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Approximately 85 per cent of all valentines are bought by females

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial – which probably occurred around 270 AD – others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival.

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the 17th century.

By the middle of the 18th century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes.

By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology.

Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged.

Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings.

Approximately 85 percent of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

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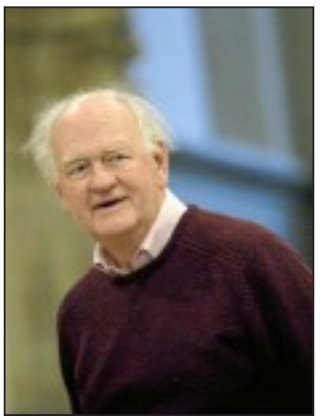
Play that will have you in tears

WARTIME weepy Goodnight Mister Tom is being brought to the stage at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Tuesday.

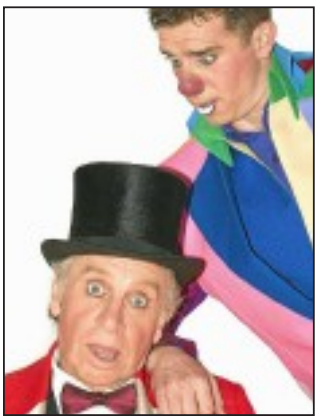
The play is an adaptation of Michelle Magorian's popular children's novel about how a young London evacuee with a sad secret forges a friendship with his cantankerous old host, the titular Mister Tom, in a rural community.

Playing Mister Tom, a role associated with the late John Thaw from a popular TV film version, is Royal Shakespeare Company actor Oliver Ford Davies, who will be familiar to fans of the blockbuster Star Wars movies as Sio Bibble in The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith. He was also Polonius to David Tennant's Hamlet at Stratford.

Goodnight Mister Tom is staged at the Grand nightly from February 8 to 12 with matinees on the Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. Tickets are priced from £6.50 to £22.50.



Oliver Ford Davies stars in Goodnight Mister Tom at The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton



Ringmaster Clive Webb and clown Danny Adams appear with Circus Hilarious

Hardeep Singh Kohli will brings his "chat show with curry" show to Wolverhampton

Joined

There is music and mirth at the Lichfield Street theatre this weekend with the Magic of Motown ensemble playing the Motor City's greatest hits in a soul tribute concert on Saturday.

Then modern day clown Danny Adams and ring master Clive Webb, father and son, are joined by the rest of the Circus Hilarious crew for family-friendly comedy at 1.30 and 6pm on Sunday.

The week after sees the return of Tamworth-based singing star Niki Evans as Mrs Johnstone in Willy Russell's classic Scouse musical Blood Brothers, at the Grand from February 14 to 19.

Craig Revel Horwood's flamboyant revival of 1980s musical Chess, created by the ABBA pair of Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus with Sir Tim Rice, returns to the West Midlands at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday to the following Saturday.

Shona White stars as the woman caught between two Chess grandmasters, one Russian and one American, in the show which includes the hit songs I Know Him So Well and One Night In Bangkok.

Members of the Birmingham Royal Ballet move across the city centre from their home venue at the Hippodrome to the Symphony Hall for an evening of Music and Dance presented by the company's director David Bintley tomorrow night (Friday).

The show is the last hurrah of the company's 20th anniversary year in the city and will include highlights from the BRB's repertoire, including the much-loved Hobson's Choice and La Fille mal Gardee. Birmingham Rep's first off-site production is Kenny Baraka's musical post-apocalyptic tale The Rememberers, the one hour tale of a teenager who holds the key to mankind's future.

It will be held in a warehoue at the AE Harris Building in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter from tomorrow (Friday) to February 19. Contact the box office on 0121 236 4455.

Tribute

Circus of Horrors bring their modern day freak show to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre on Tuesday and it is for over 16s only.

The one-nighters at the Alex continue with a visit by psychic Sally Morgan on Wedneday.

Roger Dean and the Lazy Boys present their tribute to a country music legend in The Johnny Cash Story on Friday, February 11. Birmingham School of Acting's spring season includes Jewish drama A Dybbuk in the main house at The Crescent Theatre in Birmingham from February 9 to 12.

During the same period, BSA perform adults-only drama Piano/Forte in the Crescent's Ron Barber Studio.

Raconteur, cook and comedian Hardeep Singh Kohli follows up his Nearly Naked Chef show with Chat Masala, which he describes as a "chat show with curry".

The Glaswegian host will interview local guests, including Wolverhampton-born Times journalist Sathnam Sangera, author of The Boy with the Top Knot, and Black Country medium Philip Solomon, and everyone will get a chance to sample his curry. It takes place at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre on Wednesday, February 9.

Comedy highlights will also feature East End comic Micky Flanagan at Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday. That's the same venue for Punt and Dennis, They Should Get Out More show on February 9. John Shuttleworth will be at the Town Hall on February 10.

Culture

In Wolverhampton, comedienne Andi Osho, from Channel 4's Stand Up For The Week, is at The Slade Rooms on Sunday night as part of her first tour, Afroblightly. It tells of her inspiring culture clash upbringing as a child of Nigerian parents being brought up in London's East End.

The Broad Street venue also hosts Occult Comedian Andrew O'Neill on February 9.

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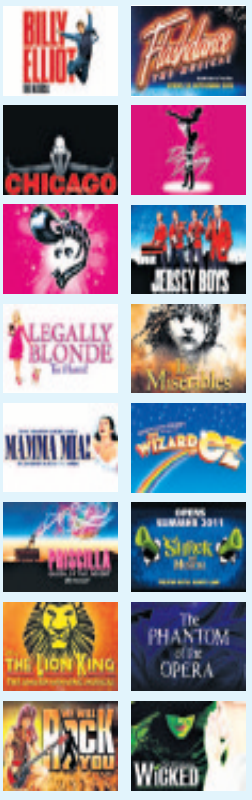

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the pulse

Saturday TV

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Choice

FAULKS ON FICTION

BBC2, 9pm

Sebastian Faulks is a busy chap – writing novels for a living may sound straightforward enough, but it can be tough going if the muse isn't working. Nevertheless, he's found the time to pen this new, four-part series that aims to get to the heart of the good, old fashioned British novel. The first edition focuses on heroes, and he has the tricky task of trying to work out why readers root for certain characters, from Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe to the more unconventional (and immoral) Becky Sharp in William Makepeace Thackeray's Vanity Fair.

BBC1

[illegible] Breakfast. [illegible] Saturday Kitchen Live. [illegible] BBC News; Regional News; Weather. [illegible] Football Focus. [illegible] A Question of Sport. (R) [illegible] Live Six Nations Rugby Union. [illegible] BBC News; Regional News; Weather. [illegible] Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Scotland (Kick-off 5.00pm).

[illegible]

BBC2

[illegible]

ITV1

[illegible]

Channel 4

[illegible]

Channel 5

[illegible]

Digital

[illegible]

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Sunday TV

Choice

THE PROMISE

Channel 4, 9pm

Channel 4 may have been criticised in recent years for its overreliance on reality shows (Big Brother in particular) to pull in the viewers, but every now and then it pops up with a real gem of a drama. It was the home of not only Red Riding and, more recently, Any Human Heart, but it's also about to broadcast The Promise, the latest work from acclaimed writer Peter Kosminsky. Set in two timeframes, it tells the parallel stories of 18-year-old Londoner Erin and her grandfather Len. Erin is about to visit Israel for the first time, and we get to see Len in his previous part of the British peacekeeping force in Palestine during the 1940s.

BBC1

[illegible] Breakfast. [illegible] Match of the Day. (R) [illegible] The Andrew Marr Show. [illegible] The Big Questions. [illegible] Countryfile. [illegible] The Politics Show. [illegible] Match of the Day Live. [illegible] [illegible] BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

[illegible] **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce takes the team to Dundee, where items include a miniature clock smuggled out of Germany during the Second World War and a copying machine from the 1780s. (R)

[illegible] **Countryfile.** [illegible] and Ellie Harrison explore the Wirral peninsula, and John Craven meets people in Cumbria who were affected by the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease 10 years ago. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

[illegible] **Lark Rise to Candleford.** [illegible]

[illegible] **Wallander.** Inspector Wallander searches for a link between three apparently motiveless murders, and tries to identify a girl who doused herself in petrol and burned to death.

[illegible] **BBC News; Regional News; Weather.**

[illegible] **Live Super Bowl XLV.** Pittsburgh Steelers v Green Bay Packers (kickoff 11.25pm): [illegible]

[illegible] BBC News.

BBC2

[illegible] CBeebies. [illegible] CBBC. [illegible] Something for the Weekend. [illegible] Film 2011 with Claudia Winkleman. (R) [illegible] Film: The High and the Mighty (1954) Disaster thriller, starring John Wayne. [illegible]

[illegible] **Ray Mears' Northern Wilderness.** The survival expert retraces the journey of explorer Samuel Hearne, who set the example for successful travel into the Canadian wilderness. (R)

[illegible] **The Funny Side of Clive Anderson** explores the funniest moments and cringe-worthy gaffes in chat shows, featuring contributions [illegible] (R)

[illegible] **Top Gear.** Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May visit Albania to test three luxurious vehicles – the Rolls-Royce Ghost, Bentley Mulsanne and Mercedes-Benz S65 AMG.

[illegible] **Arctic with Bruce Parry.** The adventurer's journey concludes in Norway. Last in the series.

[illegible] **Match of the Day 2.** Including highlights of Chelsea v Liverpool.

[illegible] **FILM** [illegible] (2007) Martial arts thriller, starring Uma Thurman.

[illegible] Film: The Crimson Kimono (1959) Detective thriller. [illegible] BBC News. [illegible] Close.

ITV1

[illegible] CITV: Mini CITV. [illegible] CITV. [illegible] The Biggest Loser. (R) [illegible] The Morning. Sunday [illegible] Dinner Date. (R) [illegible] ITV News; Weather. [illegible] Film: Columbo: A Friend in Deed (1974) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. [illegible] Midsomer Murders. (R) [illegible] Regional Programmes. [illegible] ITV News.

[illegible] **Have You've Been Framed!** Featuring holiday homes and a grumpy granny. (R)

[illegible] **Dancing on Ice.** Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby present [illegible] show, as the remaining celebrities compete for viewers' votes. With an opening performance by Torvill and Dean.

[illegible] **Wild at Heart.** Danny and Alice try to catch a [illegible]

[illegible] **Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off.** The two lowest-scoring couples compete.

[illegible] **The Sunday Night Project** [illegible] Show. Actor and comedian Greg Davies [illegible]

[illegible] **ITV News; Weather.**

[illegible] **Freddie Flintoff Versus the World.** New series. The former cricketer takes part in extreme sports.

[illegible] **Comedy Rocks with Jason Manford.** [illegible] show, with Al Murray [illegible] and Punner. (R)

[illegible] Anglo-Welsh Cup Rugby Union. [illegible] The Zone. ITV News Headlines. [illegible] Film: Exorcist: The Beginning (2004) [illegible] ITV Nightscreen. [illegible] ITV News.

Channel 4

[illegible] The Hoobs. (R) [illegible] The Hoobs. (R) [illegible] FIS World Snowboarding Championships. [illegible] T4 [illegible] T4: Friends. (R) [illegible] T4: Friends. (R) [illegible] T4: Hollyoaks. [illegible] T4: Glee. (R) [illegible] T4: The Simpsons. (R) [illegible] T4: The Simpsons. (R) [illegible] Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. (R) [illegible] Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. (R) [illegible] Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. (R) [illegible] Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. (R) [illegible] Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. (R) [illegible] Minute Meals. (R) [illegible] Deal or No Deal. [illegible] Time Team.

[illegible] **Channel 4 News.**

[illegible] **Mongrels.** A woman [illegible] of Falun Gong members.

[illegible] **Come Dine with Me.** Contestants in [illegible] Nottingham try to throw the perfect dinner party.

[illegible] **The People's Supermarket.** New series. Arthur Potts Dawson tries to create a new type of supermarket.

[illegible] **The Promise.** New series. Drama following the stories of a Londoner on a visit to present-day Israel and her grandfather, a soldier in 1940s Palestine. Starring Claire Foy.

[illegible] **Alan Carr: Chatty Man.** Featuring Billie Piper, [illegible] and [illegible]. (R)

[illegible] **FILM: The Client.** (1994) Thriller, starring Susan Sarandon.

[illegible] Film: Pollock (2000) Thriller. [illegible] Wedding House. (R) [illegible] Brothers & Sisters. (R) [illegible] Countdown. (R)

Channel 5

[illegible] Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. [illegible] Roary the Racing Car. (R) [illegible] Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) [illegible] Fireman Sam. (R) [illegible] Miss Spider's Sunny Patch Friends. (R) [illegible] The Beeps. (R) [illegible] Max. (R) [illegible] Chloe. (R) [illegible] Harry and His Bucket Full of Dinosaurs. (R) [illegible] Bob the Builder. (R) [illegible] Noddy. (R) [illegible] Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) [illegible] Little Princess. (R) [illegible] The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) [illegible] Peppa Pig. (R) [illegible] The Mr Men Show. (R) [illegible] The Mr Men Show. (R) [illegible] Do They Do It? (R) [illegible] Cowboy Builders. (R) [illegible] Film: Muppets from Space (1999) Family puppet comedy. [illegible] Film: Daryl (1985) [illegible] [illegible] Five News. [illegible] Film: Mulan (1998) Disney animated adventure. [illegible] Film: Space Cowboys (2000)

[illegible] **Unfinished Business Unwrapped.** The cultural significance of [illegible] (R)

[illegible] **FILM Rush Hour** (1998) An overly serious Hong Kong detective investigating a kidnapping in Los Angeles teams up with a loudmouthed local cop. Comedy adventure, starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker.

[illegible] **FILM Stripes.** (1981) Military comedy starring Bill Murray.

[illegible] Super Casino. [illegible] Cowboy Builders. (R) [illegible] [illegible] Holidays. (R) [illegible] The Mitchells Show. (R) [illegible] Friends. (R) [illegible] Roary the Racing Car. (R)

Digital

ITV2

[illegible]

ITV3

[illegible]

ITV4

[illegible]

BBC THREE

[illegible]

BBC FOUR

[illegible]

E4

[illegible]

FILM4

[illegible]

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the pulse

Monday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.15 Wanted Down Under. 10.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) BBC News; Weather. 11.00 Save My Holiday. 11.45 Cash in the Attic. (R) BBC News; Weather. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.30 Regional News; Weather. 1.45 Doctors. 2.15 Escape to the Country. 3.00 BBC News; Weather; Regional News. 3.05 CBBC. 5.15 Weakest Link. 6.00 BBC News; Weather. 6.30 Regional News Programmes; Weather. 7.00 The One Show. 7.30 Inside Out. BBC News; Regional News. 8.00 EastEnders. 8.30 WikiLeaks: The Secret Story: Panorama. 9.00 Outcasts. 10.00 BBC News. 10.25 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 A Question of Sport. 11.05 Inside Sport. (R) 11.45 The Graham Norton Show. (R) 12.20 The Apprentice USA. Weatherview. 1.55 Sign Zone: Ancient Worlds. (R) 2.55 Climbing Great Buildings. (R) 3.25 Save My Holiday. (R) 4.10 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.30 CBeebies. 11.35 Ready Steady Cook. 12.00 Daily Politics. 12.30 GMT with George Alagiah. 1.00 Due South. (R) 1.45 To Buy or Not to Buy. 2.30 Climbing Great Buildings. (R) 3.00 Cash in the Celebrity Attic. (R) 3.45 Flog It! 4.30 Perfection. 5.15 Antiques Road Trip. 6.00 Eggheads. 6.30 One Man and His Campervan. 7.00 Top Gear. (R) 8.00 University Challenge. 8.30 Baking Made Easy. 9.00 Horizon: How to Survive a Car Crash. 10.00 Episodes. 10.30 Newsnight; Weather. 11.20 Mad Men. 12.10 An Island Parish. (R) 12.40 BBC News. 4.00 BBC Learning Zone.

ITV1 6.00 Daybreak. 8.30 Lorraine. 9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. 10.30 This Morning. 12.30 Loose Women. 1.30 ITV News; Weather. 1.55 Regional News; Weather. 2.00 May the Best House Win. 3.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. 3.59 Regional Weather. 4.00 Midsomer Murders. (R) 5.00 The Chase. 6.00 Regional News; Weather. 6.30 ITV News; Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale. 7.30 Coronation Street. 8.00 The Lakes. 8.30 Coronation Street. 9.00 The Biggest Loser. 10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather. 10.30 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 Total Emergency. (R) 11.35 That Sunday Night Show. (R) 12.05 Grimefighters. (R) 12.30 The Zone; ITV News Headlines. 2.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 3.25 ITV Nightscreen. 5.30 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.05 Sail Mail. (R) 6.10 The Treacle People. (R) 6.20 The Hoobs. (R) 6.45 The Hoobs. (R) 7.10 Freshly Squeezed. 7.40 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.05 Frasier. (R) 8.35 According to Jim. (R) 9.00 The Secret Millionaire USA. 10.00 Desperate Housewives. (R) 10.55 Relocation: Phil Down Under. (R) 12.00 Channel 4 News Summary. 12.05 The TV Book Club. 12.30 Film: Sailor of the King. (1953) Second World War adventure remake, with Jeffrey Hunter. 2.05 Cookery School. 3.10 Countdown. 3.55 Deal or No Deal. 5.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.30 Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.55 4thoughts.tv. 8.00 Dispatches: Tabloids' Dirty Secrets. 9.00 One Born Every Minute. 10.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man. 11.05 The Joy of Teen Sex. (R) 12.10 Premier League Poker. 1.10 Mosley. 2.05 The Genius of British Art. (R) 3.00 Titanic: The Mission. (R) 3.55 Dispatches: Tabloids' Dirty Secrets. (R) 4.50 ER. (R) 5.35 Wogan's Perfect Recall. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 The Wright Stuff. 11.00 The Vanessa Show. 11.45 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. (R) 12.40 Five News. 12.45 Build a New Life in the Country. (R) 1.45 Neighbours. 2.15 Home and Away. 2.50 The Family Recipe. (R) 2.55 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 3.10 Film: Lone Rider. (2008) Western, starring Lou Diamond Phillips. 5.00 Five News at 5; Weather. 5.30 Neighbours. (R) 6.00 Home and Away. (R) 6.30 Zoo Days. (R) 7.00 Five News at 7. 7.30 How Do They Do It?; Five News Update. 8.00 Emergency Bikers. Paramedic Steve Harris helps a diabetic on the brink of a coma; Five News at 8. 9.00 Royal Navy Caribbean Patrol. 10.00 Film: Starship Troopers 3: Marauder. (2008) 12.10 America's Toughest Prisons. (R) 1.10 SuperCasino. 4.05 The FBI Files. (R) 4.55 Rough Guide to Bang for Your Buck. (R) 5.10 Wildlife SOS. (R) 5.35 House Doctor. (R)

Tuesday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.15 Wanted Down Under. 10.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) BBC News; Weather. 11.00 Save My Holiday. 11.45 Cash in the Attic. (R) BBC News; Weather. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.30 Regional News; Weather. 1.45 Doctors. 2.15 Escape to the Country. 3.00 BBC News; Weather; Regional News. 3.05 CBBC. 5.15 Weakest Link. (R) 6.00 BBC News; Weather. 6.30 Regional News Programmes; Weather. 7.00 The One Show. 7.30 EastEnders; BBC News; Regional News. 8.00 Holby City. 9.00 Outcasts. 10.00 BBC News. 10.25 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 Come Fly on the Wall. 11.45 Film: Road Trip. (2000) Comedy, starring Breckin Meyer; Weatherview. 1.10 Sign Zone: See Hear. (R) 1.40 Human Planet. (R) 2.40 The Bear Family and Me. (R) 3.40 Save My Holiday. (R) 4.25 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.30 CBeebies. 11.35 Ready Steady Cook. (R) 12.00 Daily Politics. 12.30 GMT with George Alagiah. 1.00 Due South. (R) 1.45 To Buy or Not to Buy. 2.30 Climbing Great Buildings. (R) 3.00 Cash in the Celebrity Attic. (R) 3.45 Flog It! 4.30 Perfection. 5.15 Antiques Road Trip. 6.00 Eggheads. 6.30 One Man and His Campervan. 7.00 Natural World. 8.00 A Farmer's Life for Me. The eight remaining pairs enter the world of pig-farming. 9.00 The Chinese Are Coming. China's role as a rising economic superpower. 10.00 How TV Ruined Your Life. 10.30 Newsnight; Weather. 11.20 Mad Men. 12.10 Who Gets the Best Jobs? (R) 1.10 BBC News. 4.00 BBC Learning Zone.

ITV1 6.00 Daybreak. 8.30 Lorraine. 9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. 10.30 This Morning. 12.30 Loose Women. 1.30 ITV News; Weather. 1.55 Regional News; Weather. 2.00 May the Best House Win. 3.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. 3.59 Regional Weather. 4.00 Midsomer Murders. (R) 5.00 The Chase. 6.00 Regional News; Weather. 6.30 ITV News; Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale. 8.00 Lion Country. 9.00 Taggart. 10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather. 10.30 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 The Secret Caribbean with Trevor McDonald. (R) 11.35 Cops with Cameras. (R) 12.30 The Zone; ITV News Headlines. 2.35 Crossing Jordan. 3.20 ITV Nightscreen. 5.30 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.05 Sail Mail. (R) 6.10 The Hoobs. (R) 6.35 The Hoobs. (R) 7.00 Freshly Squeezed. 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.55 Frasier. (R) 8.25 According to Jim. (R) 8.55 The Secret Millionaire USA. 9.55 Desperate Housewives. (R) 10.55 A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) 12.00 Channel 4 News Summary. 12.05 Film: Rooster Cogburn. (1975) Western sequel, starring John Wayne, Katharine Hepburn and Anthony Zerbe. 2.05 Cookery School. 3.10 Countdown. 3.55 Deal or No Deal. 5.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.30 Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.55 4thoughts.tv. 8.00 Gok's Clothes Roadshow. 9.00 Big Fat Gypsy Weddings. An insight into the lives of Britain's traveller men. 10.00 Shameless. 11.05 The Big C. 11.35 The Big Bang Theory. 12.15 UK & Ireland Poker Tour. 1.15 Bull Run. (R) 1.40 World B-Boy Series. (R) 2.35 FIS World Snowboarding Championships. (R) 3.00 Basketball. (R) 3.50 NOTV. 4.20 ER. (R) 5.05 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 The Wright Stuff. 11.00 The Vanessa Show. 11.45 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. (R) 12.40 Five News. 12.45 Build a New Life in the Country. (R) 1.45 Neighbours. 2.15 Home and Away. 2.45 The Family Recipe. (R) 2.50 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 3.05 Film: For One Night. (2006) 5.00 Five News at 5; Weather. 5.30 Neighbours. (R) 6.00 Home and Away. (R) 6.30 Zoo Days. (R) 7.00 Five News at 7. 7.30 Extraordinary Dogs; Five News Update. 8.00 Stansted: The Inside Story. New series. The work of staff behind the scenes at the UK's airports; Five News at 8. 9.00 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. Human remains are discovered in the home of a compulsive hoarder. 10.00 CSI: Miami. (R) 10.55 CSI: NY. (R) 11.55 Law & Order. (R) 12.50 SuperCasino. 4.05 The FBI Files. (R) 4.55 Animal Rescue Squad. (R)

Wednesday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.15 Wanted Down Under. (R) 10.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) BBC News; Weather. 11.00 Save My Holiday. 11.45 Cash in the Attic. (R) BBC News; Weather. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.30 Regional News; Weather. 1.45 Doctors. 2.15 Escape to the Country. 3.00 BBC News; Weather; Regional News. 3.05 CBBC. 5.15 Weakest Link. 6.00 BBC News; Weather. 6.30 Regional News Programmes; Weather. 7.00 The One Show. 7.30 Rip Off Britain. (R) BBC News; Regional News. 8.00 Waterloo Road. 9.00 Forgotten Heroes: Panorama. 10.00 BBC News. 10.25 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 The National Lottery Wednesday Night Draws. 10.45 Film 2011 with Claudia Winkleman; National Lottery Update. 11.25 Film: Diabolique. (1996) Thriller remake, starring Sharon Stone and Isabelle Adjani; Weatherview. 1.15 Sign Zone: Country Tracks. (R) 2.10 Natural World. (R) 3.10 Save My Holiday. (R) 3.55 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.30 CBeebies. 11.30 Daily Politics. 1.00 See Hear. 1.30 The Hairy Bakers. (R) 1.45 To Buy or Not to Buy. 2.30 Climbing Great Buildings. (R) 3.00 Cash in the Celebrity Attic. (R) 3.45 Flog It! 4.30 Perfection. 5.15 Antiques Road Trip. 6.00 Eggheads. 6.30 One Man and His Campervan. 7.00 Escape to the Country. (R) 8.00 Madagascar. 9.00 A History of Ancient Britain. 10.00 Have I Got Old News for You. (R) 10.30 Newsnight; Weather. 11.20 Mad Men. 12.10 The Chinese Are Coming. (R) 1.10 BBC News. 4.00 BBC Learning Zone.

ITV1 6.00 Daybreak. 8.30 Lorraine. 9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. 10.30 This Morning. 12.30 Loose Women. 1.30 ITV News; Weather. 1.55 Regional News; Weather. 2.00 May the Best House Win. 3.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. 3.59 Regional Weather. 4.00 Midsomer Murders. (R) 5.00 The Chase. 6.00 Regional News; Weather. 6.30 ITV News; Weather. 7.00 Live International Football. Denmark v England (Kick-off 7.15pm). 9.30 Harry Hill's TV Burp. (R) 10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather. 10.30 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 I Was There When the Beatles Played the Cavern. 11.35 International Football. 12.35 The Zone; ITV News Headlines. 2.35 Film: The Thing. (1982) Sci-fi horror remake, starring Kurt Russell. 4.25 ITV Nightscreen. 5.30 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.00 The Treacle People. (R) 6.10 The Hoobs. (R) 6.35 The Hoobs. (R) 7.00 Freshly Squeezed. 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.55 Frasier. (R) 8.25 According to Jim. (R) 8.55 The Secret Millionaire USA. 9.55 Desperate Housewives. (R) 10.55 Country House Rescue. (R) 12.00 Channel 4 News Summary. 12.05 River Cottage Bites. (R) 12.20 Film: Day of the Outlaw. (1959) Western, starring Robert Ryan and Burl Ives. 2.05 Cookery School. 3.10 Countdown. 3.55 Deal or No Deal. 5.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.30 Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.55 4thoughts.tv. 8.00 Beauty and the Beast: Ugly Face of Prejudice. 9.00 Mary Portas: Secret Shopper. 10.00 The Joy of Teen Sex. 11.05 Shameless. (R) 12.05 Music on 4: Sounds from the Cities. 12.40 Music on 4: The Album Chart Show Spotlight. 12.55 Music on 4: Mercury Prize Sessions. (R) 1.10 My Family's Crazy Gap Year. (R) 2.05 Animal Madhouse. (R) 3.00 Food: What Goes in Your Basket? (R) 3.55 ER. (R) 5.20 Countdown. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 The Wright Stuff. 11.00 The Vanessa Show. 11.45 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. (R) 12.40 Five News. 12.45 Build a New Life in the Country. (R) 1.45 Neighbours. 2.15 Home and Away. 2.50 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 3.05 Film: Mary Higgins Clark's Pretend You Don't See Her. (2002) Thriller, starring Emma Samms. 5.00 Five News at 5; Weather. 5.30 Neighbours. (R) 6.00 Home and Away. (R) 6.30 Zoo Days. (R) 7.00 Five News at 7. 7.30 Monkey Life; Five News Update. 8.00 Cowboy Builders; Five News at 8. 9.00 NCIS. Gibbs's mentor is linked to a double murder. 10.00 Law & Order: Criminal Intent. (R) 10.55 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. (R) 11.55 Poker. 12.55 SuperCasino. 4.05 The FBI Files. (R) 4.55 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 5.10 Wildlife SOS. (R) 5.35 House Doctor. (R)

Thursday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.15 Wanted Down Under. 10.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) BBC News; Weather. 11.00 Save My Holiday. 11.45 Cash in the Attic. (R) BBC News; Weather. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.30 Regional News; Weather. 1.45 Doctors. 2.15 Escape to the Country. 3.00 BBC News; Weather; Regional News. 3.05 CBBC. 5.15 Weakest Link. (R) 6.00 BBC News; Weather. 6.30 Regional News Programmes; Weather. 7.00 The One Show. 7.30 EastEnders; BBC News; Regional News. 8.00 Human Planet. 9.00 Outnumbered. (R) 9.30 Not Going Out. 10.00 BBC News. 10.25 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 Question Time. 11.35 This Week; Skiing Weatherview. 12.25 Sign Zone: WikiLeaks: The Secret Story: Panorama. (R) 12.55 Countryfile. (R) 1.55 Antiques Roadshow. (R) 2.55 Rip Off Britain. (R) 3.35 Save My Holiday. (R) 4.20 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.30 CBeebies. 11.35 Ready Steady Cook. 12.00 Daily Politics. 12.30 GMT with George Alagiah. 1.00 Due South. (R) 1.45 To Buy or Not to Buy. 2.30 Climbing Great Buildings. (R) 3.00 Cash in the Celebrity Attic. (R) 3.45 Flog It! 4.30 Perfection. 5.15 Antiques Road Trip. 6.00 Eggheads. 6.30 One Man and His Campervan. 7.00 The Culture Show. 8.00 The Hairy Bikers: Mums Know Best. 9.00 George VI: The Reluctant King. Profile of George VI. (R) 10.00 Victorian Pharmacy. 10.30 Newsnight; Weather. 11.20 Mad Men. (R) 12.10 The Culture Show. (R) 1.10 BBC News. 4.00 BBC Learning Zone.

ITV1 6.00 Daybreak. 8.30 Lorraine. 9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. 10.30 This Morning. 12.30 Loose Women. 1.30 ITV News; Weather. 1.55 Regional News; Weather. 2.00 May the Best House Win. 3.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. 3.59 Regional Weather. 4.00 Midsomer Murders. (R) 5.00 The Chase. 6.00 Regional News; Weather. 6.30 ITV News; Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale. 7.30 Too Old for TV?: Tonight. 8.00 Emmerdale. 8.30 Coronation Street. 9.00 Marchlands. 10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather. 10.30 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 Odd One In. (R) 11.20 The Late Debate. 11.50 Grimefighters. (R) 12.10 The Zone; ITV News Headlines. 2.15 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 3.10 Too Old for TV?: Tonight. (R) 3.35 ITV Nightscreen. 5.30 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.05 Sail Mail. (R) 6.10 The Hoobs. (R) 6.35 The Hoobs. (R) 7.00 Freshly Squeezed. 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.55 Frasier. (R) 8.25 According to Jim. (R) 8.55 The Secret Millionaire USA. 9.55 Desperate Housewives. (R) 10.55 Help! My House Is Falling Down. (R) 12.00 Channel 4 News Summary. 12.05 River Cottage Bites. (R) 12.20 Film: Broken Arrow. (1950) Western, starring James Stewart. 2.05 Cookery School. 3.10 Countdown. 3.55 Deal or No Deal. 5.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.30 Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.55 4thoughts.tv. 8.00 Relocation, Relocation. 9.00 Rome Wasn't Built in a Day. 10.00 10 O'Clock Live. 11.05 Big Fat Gypsy Weddings. (R) 12.10 Music on 4: CTRL.MX. 12.40 Music on 4: 4Play: Rumer. (R) 12.55 Music on 4: 4Play: Chapel Club. 1.10 Film: Dogville. (2003) Drama, with Nicole Kidman. 4.10 Hill Street Blues. (R) 5.00 Wogan's Perfect Recall. (R) 5.25 Countdown. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 The Wright Stuff. 11.00 The Vanessa Show. 11.45 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. (R) 12.40 Five News. 12.45 Build a New Life in the Country. (R) 1.45 Neighbours. 2.15 Home and Away. 2.50 The Family Recipe. (R) 2.55 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 3.10 Film: Mystery Woman: Oh Baby. (2006) Detective drama, starring Kellie Martin. 5.00 Five News at 5; Weather. 5.30 Neighbours. (R) 6.00 Home and Away. (R) 6.30 Zoo Days. (R) 7.00 Five News at 7. 7.30 Top Trumps: Earthmovers; Five News Update. 8.00 Julius Caesar: Rome Unwrapped; Five News at 8. 9.00 Justin Lee Collins: Turning Japanese. 10.00 Film: Just Cause. (1995) 12.05 SuperCasino. 4.05 FBI Files. (R) 4.55 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 5.10 Wildlife SOS. (R)

Friday

BBC1 6.00 Breakfast. 9.15 Wanted Down Under. 10.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) BBC News; Weather. 11.00 Save My Holiday. 11.45 Cash in the Attic. (R) BBC News; Weather. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.30 Regional News; Weather. 1.45 Doctors. 2.15 Escape to the Country. 3.00 BBC News; Weather; Regional News. 3.05 CBBC. 5.15 Weakest Link. 6.00 BBC News; Weather. 6.30 Regional News Programmes; Weather. 7.00 The One Show. 7.30 A Question of Sport. (R) BBC News; Regional News. 8.00 EastEnders. 8.30 QI. (R) 9.00 Hustle. 10.00 BBC News. 10.25 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 The Graham Norton Show. 11.20 The National Lottery Friday Night Draws. 11.30 Film: Right at Your Door. (2006); Weatherview. 1.05 Sign Zone: At Home with the Georgians. (R) 2.05 Horizon: What Is Reality? (R) 3.05 Climbing Great Buildings. (R) 3.35 Save My Holiday. (R) 4.20 BBC News.

BBC2 6.00 CBeebies. 7.00 CBBC. 8.30 CBeebies. 11.35 Ready Steady Cook. 12.00 Daily Politics. 12.30 GMT with George Alagiah. 1.00 Due South. (R) 1.45 To Buy or Not to Buy. 2.30 Real Rescues. (R) 3.00 Cash in the Celebrity Attic. (R) 3.45 Flog It! 4.30 Perfection. 5.15 Antiques Road Trip. 6.00 Eggheads. 6.30 One Man and His Campervan. 7.00 Julia Bradbury's German Wanderlust. (R) 7.30 An Island Parish. 8.00 Mastermind. 8.30 Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. 9.00 Can't Take It with You. 10.00 Fast and Loose. 10.30 Newsnight. 11.00 The Review Show; Weather. 11.50 Film: A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints. (2006) Fact-based drama, with Robert Downey Jr. 1.25 Film: Alpha Male. (2005) 3.00 BBC News. 4.20 Close.

ITV1 6.00 Daybreak. 8.30 Lorraine. 9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. 10.30 This Morning. 12.30 Loose Women. 1.30 ITV News; Weather. 1.55 Regional News; Weather. 2.00 May the Best House Win. 3.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. 3.59 Regional Weather. 4.00 Midsomer Murders. (R) 5.00 The Chase. 6.00 Regional News; Weather. 6.30 ITV News; Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale. 7.30 Coronation Street. 8.00 Children's Hospital. 8.30 Coronation Street. 9.00 Comedy Rocks with Jason Manford. 10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather. 10.30 Regional News; Weather. 10.35 30 Years of An Audience With. (R) 11.35 Take Me Out. (R) 12.45 The Zone; ITV News Headlines. 2.45 October Road. (R) 3.30 ITV Nightscreen. 5.30 ITV Morning News.

Channel 4 6.10 The Hoobs. (R) 6.35 The Hoobs. (R) 7.00 Freshly Squeezed. 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.55 Frasier. (R) 8.25 According to Jim. (R) 8.55 The Secret Millionaire USA. 9.55 Desperate Housewives. (R) 10.55 Gok's Clothes Roadshow. (R) 12.00 Channel 4 News Summary. 12.05 Film: Prince Valiant. (1954) Adventure, with Robert Wagner. 2.05 Cookery School. 3.10 Countdown. 3.55 Deal or No Deal. 5.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.30 Jamie's 30 Minute Meals. 6.00 The Simpsons. (R) 6.30 Hollyoaks. 7.00 Channel 4 News. 7.25 4thoughts.tv. 7.30 Father Ray Comes Out. 8.00 Relocation: Phil Down Under. 9.00 Embarrassing Bodies. 10.00 The Million Pound Drop Live. 11.20 10 O'Clock Live. (R) 12.25 Music on 4: Countdown to the NME Awards 2011. 12.45 Music on 4: CTRL.MX. (R) 1.10 Music on 4: The Album Chart Show Introduces Claire Maguire. 1.20 My Name Is Earl. (R) 2.05 Film: Lemming. (2005) 4.15 Hair: It's All Good. (R) 4.20 MESH. (R) 4.30 Brothers & Sisters. (R) 5.15 Countdown. (R)

Channel 5 6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 The Wright Stuff. 11.00 The Vanessa Show. 11.45 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. (R) 12.40 Five News. 12.45 Build a New Life in the Country. (R) 1.45 Neighbours. 2.15 Home and Away. 2.50 The Family Recipe. (R) 2.55 Animal Rescue Squad. (R) 3.10 Film: Lying to be Perfect. (2010) 5.00 Five News at 5; Weather. 5.30 Neighbours. (R) 6.00 Home and Away. (R) 6.30 Zoo Days. (R) 7.00 Five News at 7. 7.30 Vets in Action. (R) Five News Update. 8.00 Ice Road Truckers; Five News at 9. 9.00 The Mentalist. (R) 10.00 Law & Order. 10.55 NCIS. (R) 11.55 Cops in Crisis. (R) 12.15 SuperCasino. 3.55 Motorsport Mundial. 4.20 Royal Navy Caribbean Patrol. (R) 5.10 Wildlife SOS. (R) 5.35 House Doctor. (R)

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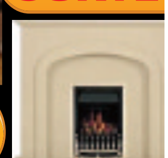
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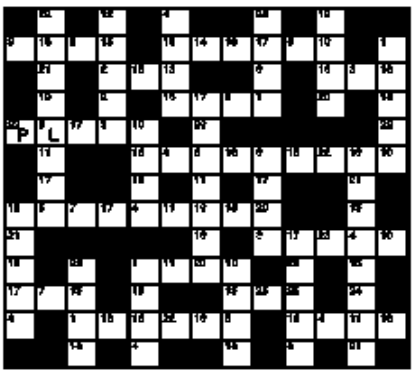
No.102

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8 L	21
9	22 P
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

1 Q	2 R	3 V	4 X	5 Y	6 C	7 D	8 L	9 T	10 G	11 B	12 E	13 U
14 F	15 K	16 N	17 H	18 M	19 J	20 O	21 A	22 I	23 S	24 Z	25 W	26 P

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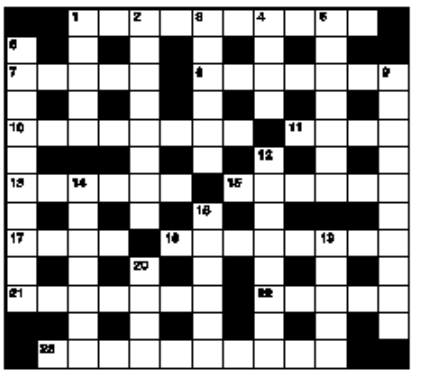
Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. As taken by a parachutist? (6,4)
7. It's failure still makes one speechless (3)
8. Cheer the proceedings with a vile pun, perhaps? (5,2)
10. Re-written rule said to be remaining (8)
11. Such a spot misled no doctor! (4)
13. Taking a sporting chance? (6)
15. Agrees it's mixed lot (6)
17. Expel from a to move Trade Union (4)
18. Remove everything and leave (5, 3)
21. Runs lightly onto the scene - and stumbles! (5,2)
22. Layer on article turned to shade of red (3)
23. Ready maim for Boy Scouts (2, 8)

Down

1. Not a bad point for trade exhibitions (3)
2. Lie dying, perhaps, and surendering (8)
3. Indian antelope that's ailing, per haps (6)
4. Exist to overthrow sin (4)
5. It will confuse men in a certain contl nent (7)
6. Come to a mean conclusion (7,3)
9. Up to date descrip tion of Christmas? (7 3)
12. Speak a noise? (8)
14. A lump. There is substantial (7)
16. Go wrong in bring ing up students (4 2)
19. Was a possessive type? (5)
20. Rules of star potentl tial (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Meeting place (10)
7. Unit of weight (5)
8. Curtail (7)
10. Poplar (8)
11. Opinion (4)
13. Estimate (6)
15. Concealed (6)
17. Inactive (4)
18. Retribution (8)
21. Sincere (7)
22. Once more (3)
23. Colony (10)

Down

1. Renovate (5)
2. Unnecessary (8)
3. Simpler (6)
4. Old violin (4)
5. Inexperienced (7)
6. Patient (10)
9. U.S. State (3, 7)
12. Feign (8)
14. Stillness (7)
16. Tranquil (6)
19. Characteristic (5)
20. Catalogue (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS.
CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Frightful, 7 Orbit, 10 Mine, 10 Stormwind, 12 Scroll (Change), 15 Interrogatory, 17 Constitute, 19 Lion, 21 Grave, 22 Sunshine. Down: 1 Green, 2 Apt, 3 Left, 4 Sidewinder, 5 Revenge, 8 Sunshine, 11 Impossible, 13 Lawyer, 14 Forward, 16 Costs, 18 Lance, 20 All.
QUICK - Across: 6 Revenue, 7 Apple, 10 Oak, 10 Overshadow, 12 Trepidation, 15 Pronounced, 17 Pandemic, 19 Odd, 21 Plug, 22 Clarify. Down: 1 Venus, 2 Nave, 3 Pure, 4 Infection, 5 Shelve, 8 Sunlit, 11 Prevalent, 13 Ridge, 14 Orderly, 16 Edify, 18 Ugly, 20 Act.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

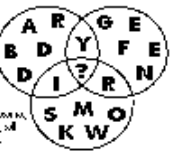
		6				9		
4				3	9		7	
7		5	2					4
1	8			6		4		
	5		8		4		1	
				9			8	7
6		1			3			9
	8		1				4	3
		3		2		1		

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS :-

4	3	8	7	1	5	6	9	2
2	9	1	4	8	6	3	5	7
6	5	7	3	9	2	8	1	4
7	1	2	6	5	8	9	4	3
9	6	4	2	7	3	1	8	5
3	8	5	9	4	1	7	2	6
1	4	6	5	3	7	2	3	8
8	2	3	1	6	4	5	7	9
5	7	9	8	2	9	4	6	1

Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION
The letter represented by the question mark is S. Solution: Oldwell, Sandwell, all Midlands towns.

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Funny Girl proved a sad final stage bow for Sheila

Book

SHEILA Steafel, like most actresses of a certain age, has melted away from our TV screens, which is a shame because she was one of the most gifted comic character actresses of the 1960s and 70s.

Even in her autobiography When Harry Met Sheila (Apex, hardback, £12.99) she shares billing with her former husband of six years, the late Steptoe And Son actor Harry H Corbett. This is no great work of showiz history but Sheila is engagingly honest, both about her unhappy childhood in apartheid-era South Africa and her relationship with Harry H.

There are lots of anecdotes from the golden age of British TV in the 1960s when Sheila had roles in such pioneering shows as David Frost's Frost Over England in 1966 with John Cleese and Ronnies Barker and Corbett and in dramas ranging from Z Cars to The Prisoner. Those in their 40s may remember her as the White Lady in children's TV series The Ghosts of Motley Hall, though perhaps her finest TV moments were as Miss Popsy Wopsy, the aspiring music hall star of The Good Old Days.

She had character roles with the Royal Shakespeare Company and one-woman shows during the 1980s and 90s but seems to have blown her chances of returning to screens via the BBC with a few ill-timed diva strops.

Her last role on stage was as Mrs Brice in the 2008 Chichester Festival revival of the musical Funny Girl. She now regrets saying that if it was the last work she ever did it would have been worth it . . . she hasn't had a major acting job since. "I only wish that Whoever is Up There hadn't taken me quite so literally!"

The book features a warm-hearted introduction from Claire Rayner, written shortly before her death last year.

Leon Burakowski

It's a small venue return for Glasvegas

After a year of writing and recording Mercury-nominated Glasvegas are back with a new album and on tour and will be playing a gig at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms in March

Gig joy for Duranies

GLASVEGAS are back. The Glaswegian band set the rock scene alight with their self-titled debut album in 2008, yielding hit single Daddy's Gone. They were nominated for the Mercury Music Prize the following year, when they spent months touring America and supporting the likes of Oasis and U2.

They seemed to fade from the scene last year but were actually busy writing and recording in California and New York, and are now set to return with their second album Euphoric Heartbreak and gigs including a concert at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms in Broad Street on Wednesday, March 23, a rare chance to see a band that's played stadia in a small venue.

Tickets cost £12.50, available from Midland Box Office 0870 320 7000 or www.wolvescivic.co.uk.

IT'S the news all Duranies have been hoping for . . . the Birmingham 80s pop legends are going back on the road for their first tour in seven years – including a home city gig at the LG Arena on May 21.

The original line-up of Simon Le Bon, Nick Rhodes, John Taylor and Roger Taylor will perform to more than 150,000 fans in 11 arena concerts across the UK.

The shows will mark the band's first European performances in support of their critically acclaimed new album All You Need Is Now, produced by Mark Ronson, and the start of a world tour that will last well into 2012.

A nine track version of Duran Duran's latest studio record was released exclusively on iTunes in December and hit the top spot on download charts in 15 countries including the UK.

An expanded version of the new record will be released in late March, in both digital and physical formats.

Tickets for the LG Arena concert are priced from £30 to £55, available on 0844 338 8000.

Bryson's home visit full of facts

Audiobook

WRITER, broadcaster and historian Bill Bryson is good company, which makes his latest audiobook an experience like listening to an entertaining and informative friend.

The Anglophile American, who first moved to England in 1977, has written books on his travels and a hugely popular science book, A Short History of Nearly Everything.

But he turns his attention closer to home, indeed his own, in At Home: A Short History of Private Life (£14.99, Random House Audiobooks).

Moving from room to room and looking at everyday objects, he uncovers the extraordinary in the ordinary.

Each room or object is the starting point for an exploration of history and human ingenuity, the who-why-when-and-where of how the modern home came to be, which, naturally, also teaches us a lot about how people used to live in the past.

The surprises come thick and fast and will supply the listener with an endless store of did-you-know anecdotes.

The book, even in an abridged form, takes six hours for Bryson to read over five CDs. Thankfully, it remains consistently interesting and his warm midwestern tone is easy on the ear.

Less easy on the ear is the bogus Russian accent of Aleksandr Orlov, the 'author' who reads A Simples Life (£4.99, Random House Audiobooks), a spoof biography of the Muscovite Meerkats who feature in a popular series of television adverts. It's thin stuff even for an hour-long CD, a mildy amusing explanation of how the meerkats came from Africa to old Russia.

Leon Burakowski

Bill Bryson – endless stories

Reviews

Showstopper! The Improvised Musical
Arena Theatre

LIVING on their wits, the Showstopper ensemble never perform the same show twice. This fast-thinking, highly-talented group create a musical on the spot from suggestions shouted by the audience.

This makes for a unique and exciting experience with the audience an integral part of the process.

It's like a Whose Line Is It Anyway sketch but massively expanded and given a West End flavour.

Showstopper recently made the transition to BBC Radio 4's 6.30 comedy slot on Wednesdays, and the Wolverhampton audience came prepared with ideas at this one-nighter on Friday.

Six actor/singers were accompanied by a keyboardist and, with only a few props, had to create magic from the combination of title, location, era and musical theatre styles. These were chosen by narrator, Sean McCann, from audience suggestions. He certainly put the actors through their paces with increasingly bizarre stage directions.

So, largely due to audience member Geoff, we saw the 90-minute musical An Afternoon On A Ship about a cruise ship sailing from Dudley Port to Bermuda, where love blossoms between sailor Trey (Oliver Senton) and Black Country housewife Louise (brilliant Pippa Evans) despite the presence of her cross-dressing husband Peter (Andrew Pugsley), one half of cabaret cruise act Foxfire. Throw into the mix a singing waxwork Chinaman and a kung fu fighting dog, and you see just how surreal it got. But the song styles remained spot on, with the Phantom of the Opera and Les Miserables pastiches being real showstoppers.

Leon Burakowski

Milton Jones, Wolverhampton Civic Hall

SHARP, quick-witted, erudite, haphazard, surreal, endearing. All these are true of comics' comic Milton Jones, who gave his audience a night to remember with his off-beat, unorthodox humour.

In fact, this was two Miltons for the price of one, with the first support act being his 'granddad', a delightful 15-minute ditty covering an alternative view of important moments in history set the standard, detailing such events as the world's first weather report and how Mozart actually met a grisly and untimely death.

Don't be fooled by the silly shirts or ridiculous hair; Jones is as clever as they come and handles audience banter with aplomb, seemingly armed with killer lines for every eventuality throw at him.

The influences of Tommy Cooper and Ronnie Barker are evident but this is a comedian who puts his own indelible mark on the comedy circuit, dishing out fast-paced one-liners better than anyone, usually laced with charming word play.

No joke is more than a few lines long and the subjects covered during an exuberant 80-minute set are too many to list, but not once does he reduce himself to swearing or toilet humour. As every good comedian does, he leaves the audience wanting more; at this rate we'll all be seeing a lot more of him.

Tim Spiers

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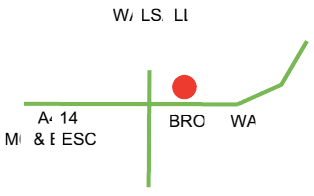

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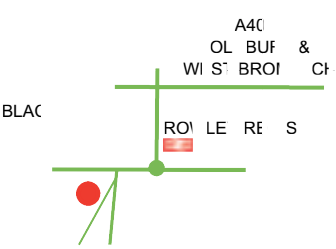

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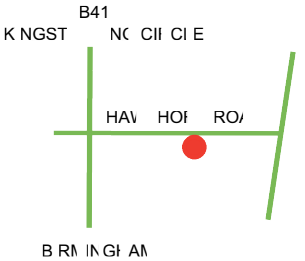

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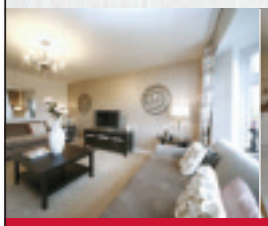

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WEST BROMWICH

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CAKEMORE ROAD

Offers in the region of £99,950

A well presented and maintained end terraced property having off road parking and garden to the rear. Shallow foregardern, front room having feature fireplace, rear sitting room, kitchen, utility and w.c. off. Winding staircase to first floor landing, two bedrooms, bathroom shower over bath, double glazing, gas fired central heating, yard garden and parking situated to the rear

OLDBURY

WALLACE ROAD

Price: £89,995

A semi detached property in need of complete refurbishment and modernisation offering excellent investment potential. uPVC front entrance door, reception hall , lounge, kitchen, breakfast bar, bathroom. Staircase to first floor off which lead four bedrooms, central heating, double glazing where specified, off road parking to front and rear together with gardens

TIPTON

GROVELAND ROAD

Offers in the region of £43,500

A 50% share within a first floor flat offering good sized well maintained accommodation within a quiet location overlooking the canal network to rear. Entrance with entry phone system to front entrance door, reception hall stores off, lounge, kitchen including oven and hob, two bedrooms, bathroom shower over bath, double glazing and central heating, communal garden and allocated car parking space.

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OLDBURY

Edward Road

An opportunity to acquire an extremely spacious, delightfully presented and considerably improved 3 bedroomed semi detached property set within this popular neighbourhood. The property has gas radiator heating, double glazing and briefly comprises :- Entrance hall, delightful lounge (with feature fireplace), separate dining room, fitted kitchen (having oven/hob), 3 bedrooms, attractive bathroom, off road parking and pleasant good sized rear garden. Viewing essential to fully appreciate the superb accommodation on offer. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £164,950

SMETHWICK

Hugh Road

Attractively presented, spacious, thoughtfully improved 3 bedroomed traditional style semi detached property in popular neighbourhood, having gas radiator heating, double glazing, requiring internal inspection and briefly comprising :- Entrance hall, delightful lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, useful side passage/store, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, off road parking and rear garden with pleasant outlook. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £157,500

BEARWOOD

Wattis Road

Deceptively spacious, well proportioned 2/3 bedroomed intermediate terraced property most conveniently situated for all local shopping facilities available within Bearwood town centre. The property requires internal inspection and briefly comprises :- Entrance vestibule, front reception room, spacious rear reception room with archway to attractive kitchen, rear vestibule area, downstairs bathroom, 2/3 bedrooms and pleasant rear garden. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £124,950

SMETHWICK

Oxford Road

A spacious, well proportioned, 3 bedroomed intermediate terraced property conveniently situated, having gas radiator heating, double glazing and briefly comprising :- Front reception room, rear reception room, kitchen, downstairs bathroom, 3 bedrooms and rear garden. Viewing highly recommended. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £119,950

OLDBURY

Tudor Road

A chance to acquire a deceptively spacious, attractively presented, 2 bedroomed semi detached property which truly requires an internal inspection to be fully appreciated, having gas radiator heating, majority double glazing and briefly comprising :- spacious open plan through lounge/dining area opening through to attractive kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom, off road parking and good sized rear garden. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £109,950

OLDBURY

Alexandra Court, Penncricket Lane

Delightfully presented, spacious, 2 bedroomed second floor flat with pleasant outlook, conveniently situated, having double glazing, approached via a communal entrance/stairs and briefly comprising :- entrance hall, delightful spacious lounge, attractive kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, communal garden and communal parking area. Viewing ESSENTIAL. VIEWING BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £79,950

SANDON ROAD, SMETHWICK

Milton Court

A deceptively spacious, well propertioned 2 bedroomed flat pleasantly situated within this retirement complex, most conveniently situated for all local shopping facilities and amenities available within Bearwood Town centre. Approached via a communal entrance and briefly comprising :- Entrance Hall (With intercom receiver), spacious lounge, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, communal gardens and communal parking area. NO UPWARD CHAIN. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £79,950

TIVIDALE

Oakham Road

An exceptionally spacious, significantly enhanced/enlarged, freehold, gas centrally heated & either uPVC or aluminium frame double glazed detached in favoured district with magnificent PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS, and abutting on to paddock/fields. Accommodation provides; porch, imposing reception hall, two double bedrooms, 16 ft lounge with patio doors, reappointed bathroom with a white suite & a separate toilet, refitted breakfast kitchen with a fine range of units, oven, hob & filter, lobby. Stairs up to first floor roof space with two windows & significant potential. Double (tandem) garage, magnificent gardens. SEDGLEY OFFICE 01902 880888

Offers in the region of £249,950

WARLEY WOODS AREA

Beechwood Road

A chance to acquire a spacious, well presented and thoughtfully improved 3 bedroomed intermediate family home set within this popular neighbourhood most convenient for Warley Woods/Golf Course, having gas radiator heating, double glazing and briefly comprising: Porch, entrance hall, delightful spacious lounge, separate dining room, fitted kitchen (with integral oven/hob and fridge), 3 bedrooms, bathroom and superb good sized rear garden with pleasant aspect. Viewing highly recommended to fully appreciate the accommodation on offer. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £215,000

TIPTON

Sedgley Road West

An EXCEPTIONALLY SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated & mostly uPVC double glazed Edwardian semi detached of tremendous character with many fine period features. To the ground floor, entrance vestibule, lengthy reception hall, sitting room with bay, separate lounge, useful cellar, kitchen. To the first floor, three bedrooms & a bathroom. To the second floor, garllery landing & double bedroom 4. Fine corner plot, secure gated parking and LARGE DOUBLE "CONTRACTOR'S GARAGE". SEDGLEY OFFICE 01902 880888

Offers in the region of £160,000

QUINTON

QUINTON ROAD WEST

A chance to acquire a deceptively spacious, well proportioned 4 bedroomed semi-detached property conveniently situated, requiring internal inspection, having double glazing, gas radiator heating and briefly comprising: Entrance hall (with downstairs WC off), spacious lounge, dining room opening through to sitting room, study, fitted kitchen (having oven/hob), side passage/utility area, 4 bedrooms, bathroom, off road parking and rear garden. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £159,950

SMETHWICK

Stanhope Road

Delightful considerably improved and well presented three bedroomed semi-detached property in pleasant position, having double glazing, gas radiator heating and briefly comprising: entrance vestibule, attractive lounge, super refitted kitchen (with oven/hob), rear vestibule (having downstairs WC off), three bedrooms, refitted bathroom, drive providing off road parking and pleasant rear garden. Viewing essential to fully appreciate the superb accommodation on offer. BEARWOOD OFFICE 0121 434 4345

Offers around £137,950

SMETHWICK

Shakespeare Road

A deceptively spacious, well presented and thoughtfully improved, 3 bedroomed intermediate family home conveniently situated, having double glazing, gas radiator heating and briefly comprising :- Porch, Entrance vestibule, delightful spacious through lounge with dining area, attractive conservatory, fitted kitchen (having integrated appliances), 3 bedrooms, bathroom, off road parking and pleasant rear garden. Viewing Essential.

Offers Around £134,950

BEARWOOD AREA

Gladys Road

An opportunity to acquire an extremely spacious, thoughtfully improved and well presented, 2 bedroomed intermediate terraced property set within this popular convenient neighborhood. Having gas radiator heating, double glazing and briefly comprising. Delightful lounge, separate dining room, attractive kitchen, downstairs bathroom, 2 good sized bedrooms, super spacious loft and pleasant rear garden. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. Bearwood office 0121 434 4345

Offers Around: £129,950

TIVIDALE

Mary Road

Conveniently situated close to City Road, a conscientiously maintained freehold, uPVC double glazed semi-detached with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS and within walking distance of so many amenities. Offering considerable potential, the accommodation includes entrance porch, reception hall, lounge, separate dining room, kitchen, pantry, two large double bedrooms (both with wardrobes), bathroom with shower. Block paved foregarden, good sized/secluded rear garden. SEDGLEY OFFICE 01902 880888

Offers in the region of £69.950

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oulsnam

0121 4299986 Bearwood

Clifford Road, Bearwood

- Immaculate Two Bedroom Terrace
- Two Seperate Reception Rooms
- Well Appointed Bathroom
- Attractive Kitchen
- Quiet, Popular Bearwood Location
- No Chain

Offers In The Region Of £154,950

Vicarage Road, Oldbury

- A Well Presented, Modern, Semi
- Three Bedrooms
- Conservatory
- No Chain

Offers in the region of £134,950

Pinkney Place, Oldbury

- Traditional Semi-Detached Property
- Delightful Breakfast Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms
- Well Appointed Bathroom

Offers in the region of £124,950

Kenelm Road, Oldbury

- A Delightful Semi-Detached Residence
- Three Bedrooms
- Superb Bathroom
- Spacious Kitchen
- Well Maintained Rear Garden
- Viewing is Highly Recommended

Offers in the region of £129,950

Farm Road, Rowley Regis

- Delightful Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Ample Off Road Parking
- Extensive Garden
- Potential to Extend
- Viewing Advised

Offers in the region of £114,950

The Lindens, Edgbaston

- A Purpose Built Studio Flat
- Allocated Parking
- Ideal Investment Opportunity
- Much Sought After Location

Ofers in the region of £52,500

Titford Road, Oldbury

144 Year Lease

- An Impeccable First Floor Appartment
- Two Bedrooms
- Modern, Well Maintained Block
- Close to Local Amenities

Offers in the region of £99,850

Richmond Road, Bearwood

- Traditional Terrace Property
- Larger Style Residence
- Three Bedrooms
- Through Lounge
- Close to Local Amenities
- No Chain

Offers in the region of £119,950

Rosebery Road, Smethwick

- Traditional Terrace property
- Larger Style Residence
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Cellar
- No Chain

Offers in the region of £114,950

Pound Road, Oldbury

- An Improved Three Bedroom Semi
- Superb Breakfast Kitchen
- Newly Appointed Bathroom
- Seperate Garage

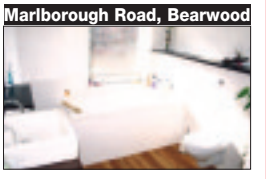
Offers in the region of £122,500

Gladys Road, Bearwood

- Two Bedroom Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms
- Ideal FTB Property
- No Chain

Offers in the region of £99,950

Marlborough Road, Bearwood



- A Well Presented Traditional Terrace
- Two Bedrooms
- Superb Bathroom
- No Upward Chain

Offers in the region of £132,000

Moat Road, Oldbury

- Traditional End Terrace Property
- Five Bedrooms
- Delightful Kitchen
- Workshop To Rear

Offers in the region of £199,950

Thimblemill Road, Bearwood

- A Traditional Terrace
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Close to Local Amenities
- No Upward Chain

Offers in the region of £113,950

Bishopton Road, Bearwood

EN SUITE

- Stylish and Much Improved
- Three Bedroom Terrace
- Conservatory
- Off Road Parking

Offers in the region of £189,950

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PART EXCHANGE WELCOME

PLOT 1 BUTLERS WALK, EDGBASTON

Impressive double-fronted three-storey executive new build home on the exclusive Butlers Walk development comprising central reception hall, downstairs guest wc, attractive dual-aspect lounge, spacious fitted kitchen/diner, utility area, four bedrooms, master having en-suite shower room/wc, family bathroom/wc, front and rear gardens, attached garage, gas central heating and double glazing. Internal viewing is essential.

£219,995

PART EXCHANGE WELCOME

PLOT 37 BUTLERS WALK, EDGBASTON

Delightfully presented double fronted three storey executive new build home occupying an impressive corner position and comprising central receptionhall, downstairs guest wc, attractive dual aspect lounge, spacious fitted kitchen/diner, utility area, four bedrooms, master having en suite shower room/wc, family bathroomwc, landscaped front and rear gardens, rear garage, gas central heating, double glazing and alarm. This property is the corner four bed show home and as such comes with all blinds and flooring as seen and must be viewed internally

£214,995

SHENSTONE ROAD, EDGBASTON

Delightfully presented double fronted three storey property 'The Belmont' occupying an impressive corner position on the Butlers Leap development comprising central reception hall, downstairs guest wc, attractive dual-aspect lounge, spaciou fitted kitchen/diner, utility area, four bedrooms (master having en suite shower room/wc), family bathroom/wc, landscaped front and rear gardens, garage to side, gas central heating, double glazing and alarm. Viewing is recommended.

£209,995

BROADWAY CROFT, OLDBURY

Substantially extended well presented semi detached residence located a cul-de-sac and comprising reception hall, generous 30 ft through lounge, spacious fitted breakfast kitchen, three double bedrooms, stylish re-fitted first floor bathroom/wc with walk-in shower, additional stylish separate wc, attractive landscaped rear garden, integral garage with garage loft storage and full-width block paved driveway, gas central heating and double glazing. Viewing is highly recommended.

£187,500

NO UNDERCHAIN

SUNNYBANK ROAD, OLDBURY

Well presented traditional style character semi-detached residence located in a popular residential road and comprising enclosed porch, reception hall, downstairs guest wc, dining room, lounge, fitted kitchen, utility room, three bedrooms, modern style first floor bathroom with shower, rear garden, side garage, driveway, gas central heating and double glazing (where specified). Viewing is highly recommended.

£169,950

BEARWOOD/SMETHWICK

GALTON ROAD

Well presented traditional style freehold terraced residence located in this pleasant neighourhood within easy reach of both Lightwoods Park and Warley Woods comprising enclosed porch, entrance hallway, through lounge/dining room, fitted kitchen, utility area, down stairs shower room/wc, three bedrooms, first floor bathroom/wc, front and rear gardens, central heating (where specified), double glazing (where specified). This property benefits from comprehensive day-to-day amenities close at hand easy access to Birmingham City Centre.

£162,500

NO CHAIN

HALESOWEN

WOODBURY ROAD

Modern style extended link detached residence in a popular road comprising enclosed porch, reception hall, spacious through lounge, extended fitted breakfast kitchen, three bedrooms, first floor bathroom/wc with shower, side garage, rear garen, driveway, double glazing and warm air central heating. No upward chain.

£154,950

NO CHAIN

QUINTON

PITMAN ROAD

Traditional style semi-detached residence located in this popular residential neighbourhood just off Quinton Road West comprising covered side entrance, reception hall, spacious through lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, four bedrooms, first floor family bathroom/wc, rear garden, block paved drive t front, side garage, double glazing and central heating. No upward chain.

£154,950

NO CHAIN

OLDBURY

GRAFTON ROAD

Spacious traditional style semi detached residence in need of some modernisation located on a popular residential road comprising enclosed porch, reception hall, spacious through lounge, kitchen, three bedrooms, first floor family bathroom/wc with shower, rear garden, driveway to front, gas central heating and double glazing. No upward chain.

£129,950

EDGBASTON

BRIXHAM ROAD

Well presented, deceptively spacious traditional style mid terraced residence comprising: Reception hall, two reception rooms, modern style fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom/wc, three good sized bedrooms, front and rear gardens, gas central heating and double glazing. No upward chain. Viewing is recommended.

£126,950

NO CHAIN

OLDBURY

BROOK ROAD

Delightfully presented spacious mid terraced residence comprising entrance hall, spacious through lounge/dining area, fitted kitchen (with built-in oven and hob), three bedrooms, first floor bathroom, separate wc, rear garden, off road parking to front, double glazing, gas central heating and alarm. Viewing is recommended.

£124,950

HAGLEY ROAD WEST, OLDBURY

Superbly presented spacious two-storey duplex apartment conveniently located on the main Hagley Road West, Quinton. First storey comprises feature conservatory, L-shaped reception hall with built-in storage, modern style fitted kitchen, spacious attractive dining area and lounge. Second storey comprises two double bedrooms, modern style re-fitted shower room, separate wc, gas central heating, double glazing, off road parking for two cars and attractive garden having pergolas and split-level deck. Internal viewing is essential.

£116,500

WANTED PROPERTY TO SELL

DO YOU OWN A PROPERTY IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREA'S:

Oldbury, Quinton, Halesowen, Warley Woods, Langley, Blackheath, Rowley Regis, Woodgate, Bartley Green, Bearwood, Harborne, Edgbaston

Please speak to one of our team if you are considering selling we'd be delighted to speak to you.

NO SALE - NO CHARGE

0121 422 9990

NO CHAIN

SMETHWICK

UNKETTS ROAD

Well presented traditional style mid terraced residence comprising entrance hall, lounge, spacious breakfast kitchen, down stairs wc, three bedrooms, first floor bathroom/wc, rear garden, off road parking to front, gas central heating (where specified) and double glazing. Viewing recommended.

£112,500

FARM ROAD, OLDBURY

Well presented traditional style mid terraced residence in popular road comprising enclosed porch, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom/wc with walk-in shower, three double bedrooms and front and rear gardens. The property also benefits from having double glazing and feature gas fuel stove. Internal viewing is highly recommended.

£112,500

NORTHFIELD

WOLSELEY HOUSE

Delightfully presented spacious modern second floor apartment located in attractive communal grounds between Northfield and Longbridge comprising L-shaped reception hall, attractive spacious lounge/fitted kitchen/diner, double bedroom, modern bathroom/wc with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, feature Juliet balcony, loft access, intercom system and secure gated allocated parking. Internal viewing is essential.

£99,995

TO LET

OLDBURY

HAGLEY ROAD WEST

Delightfully presented refurbished semi-detached residence conveniently located on Hagley Road West comprising enclosed porch, reception hall, attractive lounge, modern spacious extended fitted kitchen/diner with additional breakfast area, rear/side verandah, three bedrooms, modern tastefully refurbished bathroom/wc with shower, side garage, rear garden, driveway to front, gas central heating and double glazing. Internal viewing essential.

£695 PCM

TO LET

QUINTON

MAX ROAD

Well presented tradtional style semi-detached residence located in popular residential area in Quinton comprising enclosed porch, reception hall, two reception rooms, conservatory, kitchen, downstairs guest wc, three bedrooms, first floor bathroom/wc with electric shower, off road parking to front, attractive rear garden, double glazing and gas central heating. Viewing recommended. Available for viewings now.

£595 PCM

TO LET

EDGBASTON

HOLLYMOUNT

Well presented spacious modern style furnished ground floor apartment superbly located in Edgbaston in the popular Hollymount development off the main Hagley Road. Accommodation comprises generous reception hall, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom with shower, garage to rear, intercom, double glazing and gas central heating. Viewing is recommended.

£575 PCM

TO LET

QUINTON

WORLS END LANE

Well presented traditional style detached residence in a popular residential road and comprising reception hall, spacious though lounge, fitted kitchen, covered side entrance, three bedrooms, first floor bathroom with shower, rear garage, rear garden, gated driveway to front, gas central heating, double glazing and alarm. Viewing is highly recommended.

£575 PCM

LANDLORDS WANTED

DO YOU HAVE A PROPERTY TO LET IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Quinton, Oldbury, Warley Woods, Bearwood, Halesowen, Harborne, Edgbaston, Bartley Green, Woodgate, Langley, Tividale, Blackheath, Rowley Regis.

IF YOU HAVE WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO SPEAK TO YOU

0121 422 9990 NO LET NO FEE

TO LET

HARBORNE

QUINTON ROAD

Well presented mid terraced residence comprising reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms, first floor bathroom/wc with shower, front, rear gardens and gas central heating and double glazing.

£550 PCM

TO LET

OLDBURY

OLIVE MOUNT

Deceptively spacious recently refurbished end terraced family residence comprising entrance hall, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, utility room, downstairs bathroom/wc (with shower), three good sized bedrooms, first floor shower room, front and side gardens. The property also benefits from having gas central heating and double glazing. Viewing recommended.

£550 PCM

TO LET

SMETHWICK

NORMAN ROAD

Immaculately presented stylish unfurnished terraced residence in an excellent location comprising entrance hall, attractive lounge with feature fireplace and Living Flame gas fire, modern fitted breakfast kitchen having feature lighting with integrated dishwasher, washing machine and American style fridge/freezer, downstairs guest wc, three bedrooms, modern stylish first floor bathroom/wc with shower, attractive landscaped rear garden, full width feature cobbled driveway to front, gas central heating, double glazing and alarm. Must be viewed internally.

£550 PCM

TO LET

OLDBURY

TITFORD ROAD

Well presented unfurnished semi-detached residence conveniently located for local schools, bus routes and local Asda comprising entrance hall, two reception rooms, modern refitted kitchen, two bedroms, additional box room, modern first floor refitted bathroom/wc, front and rear gardens, double glazing and central heating. Viewing recommended.

£520 PCM

TO LET

OLDBURY

VICTORIA MEWS

Delightfully presented modern terraced residence comprising reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, downstairs guest wc, two double bedrooms, modern first floor bathroom/wc with shower, front and rear gardens. The property also benefits from having gas central heating and double glazing. Viewing recommended.

£500 PCM

TO LET

OLDBURY

TITFORD ROAD

Well presented mid terraced residence comprising reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms, bathroom/wc with shower, rear garden, off road parking. The property also benefits from having gas central heating, double glazing and alarm.

£500 PCM

www.skitts.net

NEW

TIPTON
MIDDLE MEADOW

- ★ Modern five bedroom detached three storey property
- ★ Lounge, dining room and kitchen
- ★ Downstairs WC, two en suites and family bathroom
- ★ Conservatory
- ★ Detached garage and driveway
- ★ Front and rear gardens
- ★ Still under NHBC guarantee

£240,000

NEW

TIPTON
WEDNESBURY OAK ROAD

- ★ Two/three bedroom detached dormer bungalow
- ★ Lounge, kitchen
- ★ Dining room/bedroom three
- ★ Conservatory
- ★ Partial double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Tandem garage and driveway
- ★ Front and rear gardens

£189,995

REDUCED

TIPTON
ADDENBROOK WAY

- ★ Modern four bedroom detached
- ★ Lounge, dining room, kitchen with utility area
- ★ Downstairs WC, en suite to master bedroom
- ★ Family bathroom
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Garage and driveway
- ★ Front and rear gardens

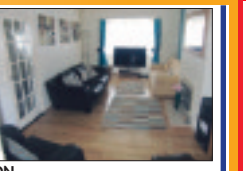
WAS £199,995 NOW £195,000

NEW

TIPTON
DAISY MEADOW

- ★ Three bedroom modern detached
- ★ Two reception rooms
- ★ Kitchen with utility room
- ★ Downstairs WC, upstairs family bathroom
- ★ En suite to master bedroom
- ★ Off road parking and integral garage
- ★ Central heating and double glazing (where specified)

£165,000



TIPTON
HORSELEY ROAD

- ★ Three bedroom semi detached
- ★ Lounge, dining room and fitted kitchen
- ★ Downstairs shower room and downstairs WC
- ★ First floor family bathroom
- ★ Majority double glazing
- ★ Gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Off road parking and rear garden

£140,000

REDUCED

TIPTON
SHINGLERS DRIVE

- ★ Three storey semi detached
- ★ Three/four bedrooms
- ★ Lounge, kitchen diner and downstairs cloakroom
- ★ En suite to master bedroom plus family bathroom
- ★ Central heating and double glazing (where specified)
- ★ Garage and off road parking
- ★ Rear garden

WAS £144,950 NOW £140,000

NEW

TIPTON
GOSPEL OAK ROAD

- ★ Modernised three bedroom mid terrace
- ★ Two reception rooms
- ★ Fitted kitchen with utility room
- ★ Downstairs family bathroom
- ★ En suite shower room
- ★ Upstairs WC
- ★ Double glazing and central heating (where specified)
- ★ Rear garden

£122,995

NEW

TIPTON
VICTORIA ROAD

- ★ Four bedroom end of terrace
- ★ Two reception rooms
- ★ Central heating and double glazing (where specified)
- ★ Downstairs shower room
- ★ Upstairs family bathroom

£160,000

NEW

TIPTON
TOLL END ROAD

- ★ Two/three bedroom extended semi detached
- ★ Lounge and extended breakfast kitchen
- ★ Downstairs bedroom/dining room
- ★ Downstairs shower room and first floor family bathroom
- ★ BG and gas fired CH (where specified)
- ★ Separate detached garage, front and rear gardens

£139,995

REDUCED

TIPTON
SANNDERS CRESCENT

- ★ Three bedroom two and a half storey town house
- ★ Lounge diner, fitted kitchen, ground floor WC
- ★ En suite to master bedroom,
- ★ Central heating and double glazing (where specified)
- ★ Garage and parking
- ★ Rear garden

WAS £136,950 NOW £130,000

NEW

TIPTON
HUDSON ROAD

- ★ Three bedroom semi detached
- ★ Lounge, dining room and kitchen
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Off road parking
- ★ Garage
- ★ Rear garden

£125,000

NEW

TIPTON
MANSION DRIVE

- ★ Two bedroom semi detached
- ★ Lounge and kitchen
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Garage with driveway
- ★ Additional parking to the front
- ★ Rear garden

£107,500

NEW

TIPTON
GREAT MEADOW

- ★ Two bedroom coach house
- ★ Entrance hall
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Fitted kitchen
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Allocated parking

£89,995

NEW

TIPTON
PARK LANE WEST

- ★ Two bedroom mid terrace
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Breakfast kitchen
- ★ First floor bathroom
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Rear garden

£89,995

REDUCED

TIPTON
SANNDERS CRESCENT

- ★ Three bedroom two and a half storey town house
- ★ Lounge diner, fitted kitchen
- ★ Ground floor WC, en suite to master bedroom
- ★ Family bathroom
- ★ Central heating and double glazing (where specified)
- ★ Garage, parking and rear garden

WAS £135,000 NOW £127,500

CALLING ALL FIRST TIME BUYERS

At Skitts we believe we do more to help people buy and sell houses than any other local Estate Agents. On Tuesday 8th February we are holding a **First Time Buyer Evening** from **5-8 pm.** If you are looking to buy your first home or just thinking about it and don't know if you can afford to, then come along to our **OPEN EVENING** and get:

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You can book an appointment time to suit you to avoid waiting or just turn up on the night! Hopefully we can find your first home!

£159,995

TIPTON

PLOTS 1 & 2 MYRTLE TERRACE

- ★ Three bedroom detached houses
- ★ Lounge/diner
- ★ Kitchen with appliances
- ★ En suite to master bedroom
- ★ Family bathroom
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Front and rear gardens
- ★ Fully fitted alarm system

STAR BUY

TIPTON
PORTFIELD DRIVE

- ★ Modern three bedroom semi detached
- ★ Lounge and dining room
- ★ Kitchen and conservatory
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specified)
- ★ Off road parking for several vehicles and garage
- ★ Side and rear gardens

REDUCED Was £135,000 Now £130,000

TIPTON
CLARKES GROVE

- ★ Two bedroom semi detached bungalow
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Fitted kitchen
- ★ Shower room
- ★ Conservatory
- ★ Double glazing and gas fired central heating (where specific)
- ★ Driveway and garage
- ★ Front and rear gardens

£119,995

TIPTON
HIGHFIELD ROAD

- ★ Three bedroom semi detached
- ★ Lounge/diner, kitchen, conservatory
- ★ Double glazed and central heating (where spec)
- ★ Driveway and rear garden
- ★ Alarmed

£110,000

INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

Property	Price	Rental Price	Return on Asking Price
Avern Close Tipton	£54,995	£350	7.6%
Oak Road Tipton	£87,995	£450	6.1%
Great Meadow Tipton	£89,995	£450	6%
Park Lane West Tipton	£89,995	£450	6%
Westgate Oldbury	£89,995	£450	6%
Broadcroft Tipton	£94,995	£450	5.6%
Tudor Street Tipton	£94,995	£500	6.3%
Gilbert Street Tipton	£105,995	£475	5.7%
Stella Road Tipton	£109,995	£550	6%

Tipton
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Wednesbury
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Willenhall
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NEW

WEDNESBURY
COLLINS ROAD
★ This traditional-style three bedroom semi detached home
★ Well presented accommodation with potential for future extension (subject to Local Authority planning permission).
£144,950

NEW

WEDNESBURY
ST. PETER CROFT
Situated in a quiet cul de sac on a larger than average plot, this modern-style semi detached home offers accommodation of generous proportions and is covered by the remainder of the builders NHBC guarantee.
£139,950

NEW

WEDNESBURY
PEMBERTON CRESCENT
With double glazing and combination heating throughout this three bedroom detached property is offered for sale with no upward chain and is competitively priced for a quick sale.
£132,500

NEW

WEST BROMWICH
HEATH LANE
In the much desired area of West Bromwich this semi detached property is offered for sale with no upward chain with modernisation needed throughout.
£119,950

NEW

WEST BROMWICH
VICARAGE ROAD
This traditional terrace in a popular location of West Bromwich is considered a lovely starter home with two bedrooms, a re-fitted kitchen and bathroom, and the potential for off road parking at the rear
£97,950

NEW

WEDNESBURY
CRANKHALL LANE
This nicely presented three bedroom town house has been extended to provide excellent family accommodation. With central heating and double glazing throughout the property benefits from off road parking to the front
£94,950

NEW

MOXLEY, WEDNESBURY
HUGHES ROAD
This large three bedroom semi detached property benefits from two reception rooms Economy 7 heating and double glazing, a large kitchen, a garage and if offered for sale with no upward chain.
£92,250

NEW

WEST BROMWICH
MARSH LANE
Offered for sale with no upward chain, this conveniently located three bedroom semi detached home has double glazing and condensing central heating with the benefit of a garage to the rear.
£91,950

NEW

DARLASTON
WAVERLEY ROAD
Situated in a popular road, close to the amenities of Darlaston town centre, this spacious traditional-style mid terrace property has central heating and double glazing and offers potential for further improvement..
£89,950

NEW

DARLASTON
THE GREEN
An opportunity for a First time buyer to step on to the property ladder with a 50% share of this three bedroomed end of terrace property is ideally located for Darlaston Town Centre.
£49,950 50% share

"Thank you for that special touch. . . . ."

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NEW

WEDNESBURY
RYDERS CHAMBERS, SPRING HEAD
Freehold building for sale
Attractive Facade
Centrally located to Town Centre and parking
Four ground floor rooms, three of good proportion
Two first floor rooms
Ground and first floor w/c s
Combination central heating
Vacant possession
Suit a variety of uses
£79,950

REDUCED

WEST BROMWICH
HYDES ROAD
★ Traditional-style detached property in a convenient
★ Loft conversion providing a fourth bedroom with en-suite
★ 100 rear south facing garden
★ Through lounge/dining room
★ Three first floor bedrooms
★ Re-fitted family bathroom
★ Off road parking to the fore
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£199,950 offers over

REDUCED

WEDNESBURY
GOLDICROFT ROAD
★ Traditional style detached house
★ Three bedrooms and attic room
★ Fully double glazed and centrally heated
★ Through lounge/dining room
★ Re-fitted kitchen and bathroom
★ Extended utility
★ Garage
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£165,000 Offers Over

REDUCED

BILSTON
WRENBURY DRIVE
A recently built four bedroom link detached property in a cul de sac location. Having the remainder of the builders NHBC guarantee , the property is offered for sale with no upward chain
£159,950

REDUCED

WEDNESBURY
HOLDEN ROAD
★ Very large semi detached property
★ Situated in popular location
★ Three double bedrooms
★ Two reception rooms
★ Lovely large garden
★ Large garage to the fore.
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£134,950 reduced for quick sale

REDUCED

WEST BROMWICH
17 LEACROFT GROVE
Enjoying a private aspect to the rear garden and boasting generous bedrooms, this property is offered for sale with no upward chain and is considered ideal for the family buyer. REDUCED FOR A QUICK SALE - MUST BE VIEWED
£120,000

REDUCED

WEDNESBURY
HOLLY ROAD
This traditional style two bedroom semi detached property is situated in a popular cul de sac off Woden Road North and is offered for sale with no upward chain. Thought ideal for young professionals , being ideally located for access to the motorway network at Junction 9 of M6. The accommodation benefits from majority central heating and double glazing.
£119,500

REDUCED

WEDNESBURY
DARBY ROAD
★ Semi detached house
★ Ideal first time purchase
★ Two bedrooms
★ Recently fitted kitchen
★ Re-fitted first floor bathroom
★ Private enclosed rear garden
★ Off road parking to the fore
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£117,500

REDUCED

WEDNESBURY
WINDMILL STREET
★ Superbly presented mid terraced house
★ Two bedrooms
★ Contemporary kitchen and bathroom
★ Two reception rooms
★ Enclosed rear garden
★ Sumptuous first floor bathroom
★ Ideal for first time buyers
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£104,950

REDUCED

Darlaston
Heathfield Lane West
Having the benefit of central heating and double glazing, this traditional semi would be ideal for first time buyers looking for a home in which to grow. Within the catchment area of popular local schools and close to Darlaston town centre and transport links to Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham this attractively priced property briefly comprises of : Reception hall, two reception rooms, kitchen, guest wc, three bedrooms and first floor shower room, generous rear garden and driveway providing off road parking to the fore
£79,950

REDUCED

Darlaston
Cash Joynson Avenue
Situated in Darlaston, convenient for schools, bus routes and shopping facilities, this three bedroom end terrace property offers great value for first time buyers or investment purposes. The property benefits from a condensing central heating system and briefly comprises of : Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining kitchen, ground floor Bathroom, Garden and Garage facility.
£75,000

OPEN VIEWING SAT 5TH & SUN 6TH FEB 12 - 2PM

WEST BROMWICH
CALDWELL STREET
Situated in the Stone Cross area of West Bromwich, convenient to local shops, schools and transport links, this three bedroom semi detached house is offered for sale with no upward chain. The property benefits from central heating and double glazing but offers scope for further improvement. Having the addition of a useful conservatory and the bonus of secure off road parking to the rear.
£104,950

REDUCED

DARLASTON
HALL STREET
THIS MODERN TWO BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT IS OFFERED FOR SALE WITH NO UPWARD CHAIN. WITH ECONOMY 7 ELECTRIC HEATING AND DOUBLE GLAZING THE PROPERTY IS CLOSE TO ALL AMENITIES AND INCLUDES PRIVATE PARKING TO THE REAR.
£62,950

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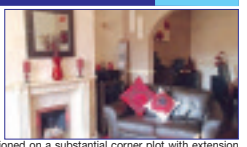
Wheatley Street, West Bromwich — NEW



An Excellent Extended Semi Detached House positioned on a substantial corner plot with extension potential (subject to planning permission). Benefitting from Central Heating and Double Glazing. Accomodation Comprises- Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Extended Kitchen, 2 Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom/ WC, Large Gardens to Front, Rear & Side and Large Detached Garage with Gated Vehicle Access.
Viewing 0121 525 2111 OFFERS AROUND: £112,950

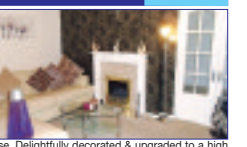
Bedford Road, West Bromwich — NEW

A Modern Three Bedroom Detached House. No Upward Chain. Central Heating and Double Glazed. Accomodation Comprises Hall with Guest Cloaks/ WC, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Dining Room, Master Bedroom with En Suite Shower Room/ WC, 2 Further Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Rear Garden and Driveway Off Road Parking Leading to Integral Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £124,950

Radnor Green, West Bromwich — NEW

A Three Bedroom Semi Detached House within this popular residential area. Benefitting from Central Heating and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Verandah with WC and Brick Stores, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom with Separate WC, Gardens to Front and Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £99,950

Thursfield Road, West Bromwich — NEW



An Excellent, Extended 4 Bedroom End Terraced House. Delightfully decorated & upgraded to a high standard, this property is well appointed for local schools and transport links. Accomodation Comprises, Porch, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen/ Diner, Guest Cloaks/ WC, Conservatory, 4 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Large Low Maintenance Rear Garden, and Gated Block Paved Parking to Front.
Viewing 0121 525 2111 OFFERS AROUND: £174,950

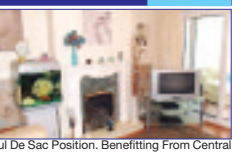
Charlemont Road, West Bromwich — NEW

A Delightful, Detached House pleasantly situated in this much sought after residential area. Upgraded throughout to high standard. Benefitting from double glazing, central heating and intruder alarm. Offering surprisingly spacious accomodation comprising- Storm Porch, Hall with Guests Cloaks/WC, 23 ft Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, 18ft Refitted Kitchen, 3 Good Size Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom, Separate WC, Large Rear Garden, 2 Car tandem Garage and Driveway Affording Off Road Parking for Several Cars.
Viewing 0121 525 2111 OFFERS AROUND: £269,950

Hallam Street, West Bromwich — REDUCED

A Spacious Ground Floor Flat within the popular block of Hallam Court. Benefitting From Double Glazing, Electric Storage Heaters, Intruder Alarm and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises- Hall, Lounge, 2 Bedrooms, Shower Room/ WC, Refitted Kitchen, Parking Area and Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £69,950

Devereux Road, West Bromwich — REDUCED



An Attractive End Terraced House with a Quiet Cul De Sac Position. Benefitting From Central Heating, Double Glazing and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Hall, Open Plan Lounge/ Dining Room, Conservatory, Kitchen, Shower Room/ WC, Gardens to Front & Rear.
Viewing 0121 525 2111 OFFERS AROUND: £119,950

Cambridge Street, West Bromwich — REDUCED

Ideal for first time buyers! A Centrally Heated & Double Glazed Mid Terraced House. Excellent Town Centre Location. Accommodation Briefly comprises: 2 Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom/ WC, 2 Bedrooms and Gardens to Front & Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £94,950

Rydding Lane, West Bromwich — REDUCED

A larger Type Traditional Semi Detached House requiring upgrading and modernisation but priced accordingly. Benefitting Central Heating, Almost Entirely Double Glazed and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises- Porch, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, 3 Good Size Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Gardens to Front & Rear, Off Road Parking to front, Garage to side and Vehicle Access to Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £144,950

Rayford Drive, West Bromwich

A Delightful Semi Detached House, situated within the popular Bustleholme Mill Estate. Benefitting from Central Heating, Double Glazing and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises Porch, Lounge and Open Plan Kitchen/ Diner, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Gardens to Front & Rear, Driveway Off Road Parking Leading to Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £127,950

Wood Lane, West Bromwich

A Second Floor Modern Apartment with lift access. Based on a 75% shared ownership for the over 55's this property is the ideal retirement home offering spacious accomodation built to an excellent standard. Accomodation Comprises, Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Master Bedroom with Ensuite Shower Room/ WC, 2nd Bedroom, Bathroom/ WC and Secure Car Parking.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £69,950

Kiniths Way, West Bromwich

An excellent Extended Traditional Semi Detached House. Great location for Dartmouth Park and Sandwell Hospital. Benefitting From Central Heating, Double Glazing, Intruder Alarm and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Integral Porch, Hall, Open Plan Lounge/ Dining Room, Conservatory, Extended Kitchen, Study/ Play Room, Ground Floor Shower Room/ WC, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Large Gardens to Front & Rear, Garage and Driveway Off Road Parking.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £167,950

Phoenix Street, West Bromwich

An Attractive Mid Terraced House benefitting from Central Heating and Double Glazing. This deceptively spacious property comprises- Storm Porch, Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom/ WC, 3 Bedrooms, Gardens to Front & Rear, Large Garage to Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £95,000

Willett Road, West Bromwich

A Good Size Extended Semi Detached House with excellent location for local schools and amenities. Benefitting form Central Heating and Double Glazing. Accomodation Comprises- Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Extended Kitchen, Lobby with WC, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gardens to Front & Rear, Driveway Off Road Parking, Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £139,950

Walsall Road, West Bromwich

An Extended Mid Terraced House. Benefitting from Central Heating, Double Glazing and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Gardens to Front & Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £109,950

Ruskin Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands

A good sized 3 bed End Terraced property with loft conversion with good extention potental, Benefitting from No upward chan Alarm, off road parking , lounge, dining room, Extended Kitchen, Guest Wc, 3 bedrooms, loft room and Family Bathroom with Jacuzzi. Off road parking and Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £129,950

Greswold Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands

An Excellent Semi Detached House Extended on Two Floors to provide superb family accomodation including 3 Double Bedrooms. Benefitting from Central Heating, Double Glazing and Intruder Alarm. Accomodation comprises; Porch, Hall with Guest Cloaks/ WC, Extended Lounge, Dining Room, Extended Fitted Kitchen, 3 Double Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom/ WC, Long Rear Gardens with Decking Area and Garage to Rear with Rear Vehicle Access. Pleasant open aspect to the front.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £149,950

Stanley Road, West Bromwich

An Attractive Traditional Semi Detached House located in a quiet residential area. Benefitting from Central Heating and Double Glazing. Accomodation Comprising Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory with WC, Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Gardens to Front & Rear, Driveway Off Road Parking and Garage with Rear Vehicle Access.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £159,950

Charlemont Road, West Bromwich

A Superb Detached Bungalow, situated on a Large Corner plot, which has been fully refurbished to an excellent standard. Benefitting from Central Heating, Double Glazing and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, 3 Double Bedrooms, Kitchen, Utility, Bathroom/ WC, Guest Cloaks/ WC, 3 x loft rooms, Large Rear Garden, Large Driveway Off Road Parking.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £249,950

St Valentines Close, West Bromwich

A Spacious Extended, Four Bedroom Link Detached House located within a Quiet Cul De Sac. Benefitting form Central Heating & Double Glazing. Accomodation Comprises- Porch, Hall with Guest Cloaks/ WC, 2 Reception Rooms, Conservatory, Kitchen, Master Bedroom with En Suite Shower Room, 3 Further Bedrooms, Shower Room/ WC, Gardens to Rear and Driveway Off Road Parking to Front.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £244,950

Kelverley Grove, West Bromwich

Situated in a popular area & convenient for the Railway Station this semi detached property benefits from central heating, double glazed & intruder alarm. Briefly comprising reception hall, open plan lounge/dining room, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom/wc, off road parking for 2 cars, garage & rear garden.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £144,950

Turner Street, West Bromwich

A 2 Bedroom Mid Terraced House with Central Heating and Double Glazing. The Property Comprises:- Entrance Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom/, Conservatory, 2 Bedrooms, master with En-Suite, Garage to rear, Gardens to Front and Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £95,000

Trinity Road North, West Bromwich

No Upward Chain. A 3 bedroom mid terrace house benefiting from central heating & double glazing. Further comprising 2 reception rooms, kitchen & bathroom.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £85,500

Manorford Avenue, West Bromwich, West Midlands

A Good Size 3 Bedroom Semi Detached located within the Popular Bustleholme Mill Estate. Benefitting from Central Heating, Double Glazing and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Hall, Through Lounge/ Diner, Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Gardens to Front & Rear, Shared Off Road Parking to Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £119,500

Clifford Road, West Bromwich

A Good Size Mid Terraced House. No Upward Chain. Benefitting form Central Heating and Majority Double Glazing. Accomodation Comprises Porch, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Ground Floor Bathroom/ WC, Verandah, 3 Bedrooms, Gardens to Front & Rear.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £89,950

Vowles Road, West Bromwich

An Impressive 4 Bedroom, Modern 3 Storey Mid Town House. Benefitting From Central Heating, Double Glazing and Intruder Alarm. The Accomodation is arranged on 3 floors and comprises- Entrance Hall with Guest Cloaks/ WC, Kitchen/ Diner, Lounge, 4 Bedrooms, 2 En Suite Shower Rooms, Family Bathroom/ WC, Rear Garden, Off Road Parking and Integral Garage. NHBC Warranty 7 years remaining.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £184,500

Julia Gardens, West Bromwich

A three bedroom semi detached bungalow situated in a quiet cul de sac location. Having UPVC double glazing and electric storage heating, the deceptively spacious accommodation includes porch, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms on ground floor, refitted bathroom, loft conversion/ bedroom three. Landscaped gardens front and rear with block paved driveway leading to single garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £157,500

Esher Road, West Bromwich

A Double Fronted End Terraced House benefitting from Central Heating and Double Glazing. Accomodation Comprises Entrance Hall, Through Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Seperate WC, Gardens to Front & Rear and Off Road Parking.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £124,000

Creed Way, West Bromwich

Available with just a 5% deposit on the easystart scheme that lets you own 100% of the property for 85% of the price now. A Brand New 1st floor apartmentment on the newly built Central Square development. Benefitting from Central Heating, Double Glazing and No Upward Chain. Accomodation Comprises, Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom/ WC, 2 Bedrooms, Allocated Parking Space.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £67,500

Andrew Road, West Bromwich

An Attractive, Semi Detached House, situated in this popular residential area and convenient for the Railway Station. Centrally Heated, Double Glazed. Accomodation comprises Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom/ WC, Driveway Parking, Garage and Pleasant Rear Garden.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £136,950

Charlemont Avenue, West Bromwich

A Delightful Traditional Semi Detached House with a popular cul de sac location. Almost entirely Double Glazed and Centrally Heated, this property offers excellent family sized accomodation. Accomodation Briefly Comprises- Hall, Guest Cloaks/ WC, Lounge, Sitting room extended into small conservatory, Sun Lounge, Kitchen, 3 Good Size Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom/ WC, Split level gardens to Front & Rear and Driveway Off Road Parking to Side Garage.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £165,000

Arlington Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands

An Extended Traditional Semi Detached House with excellent location for local schools and amenities. Benefitting From Central Heating and Double Glazing (where specified). Briefly Comprising- Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Extended Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Refitted Shower Room/ WC, Driveway to Front and Large Rear Garden and Garage with Rear Vehicle Access.
OFFERS AROUND:
Viewing: 0121 525 2111 £169,950

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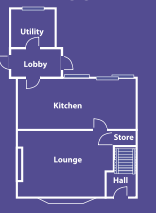

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Bassett Road, Wednesbury — NEW

- A 3 Bedroom Mid Terrace Home
- Gas Central Heating
- UPVc Double Glazing (as specified)
- Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £84,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Station Street, Darlaston — REDUCED

- A Period 2 Bedroom Mid Terrace Home
- Well Positioned for both Walsall & Darlaston Town Centres
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (where specified)
- Lounge

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF: £72,000
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Prince George Road, Wednesbury

- A 2 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- Excellent Commuter Links
- No Upward Chain!
- Double Glazing (where specified)

OFFERS AROUND: £89,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Carisbrooke Road, Wednesbury

- An Extremely Well Presented 3 Mid Terrace Home
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £99,950
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Brunswick Park Road, Wednesbury — REDUCED

- 3 Bedroom End Terrace
- Deceptively Spacious & Much Improved
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen

OFFERS AROUND: £95,000
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Devon Road, Woods Estate, Wednesbury — NEW

- 2 Bedroom Semi Detached
- Corner Plot
- Central Heating & Double Glazing (As specified)
- No Upward Chain!

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Hamstead Terrace, Wednesbury

- A 2 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- Placed within a Cul-de-Sac Location
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (where specified)
- Reception Hall & Downstairs W/C

OFFERS AROUND: £104,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

All Saints Road Darlaston — NEW

A 3 bedroom mid terrace home. The property is centrally heated (as specified) and is provided with no upward chain! The accommodation briefly comprises lounge with cast iron fireplace, dining room, re-fitted kitchen, ground floor bathroom/wc, 3 bedrooms (3rd bedroom off bedroom 2) and an enclosed rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £89,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Church Hill, Wednesbury — NEW

- A Spacious 3 Bedroom Semi Detached
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing
- No Upward Chain
- Recently Refurbished

OFFERS AROUND: £149,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Stead Close, Burberry Green, Tipton — NEW

- A Modern 3 Bedroom Detached Home
- Quiet Cul-de-Sac Location
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (as specified)
- Reception Hall & Guest WC

OFFERS AROUND: £164,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Wakes Road, Wednesbury Wednesbury — NEW

A well presented 3 bedroom semi detached home. The property is located in a quiet cul-de-sac location and is presented to a very high standard. the accommodation is gas centrally heated and double glazed (as specified) and briefly comprises a reception hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, utility room, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom and enclosed rear garden.

Offers Around £132,950
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Park Lane, Wednesbury

- Much Improved Mid Terrace
- 2 Double Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Dining Room

OFFERS AROUND: £109,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Brunswick Park Road, Wednesbury

- An Extended 3 Bedroom Detached Home
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (where specified)
- Reception Hall
- Lounge

OFFERS AROUND: £179,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Remembrance Road, Wednesbury

- Extended 3 Bedroom Mid Terrace Home
- Gas Central Heating
- UPVc Double GLazing (Where specified)
- Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £99,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Darby Road, Wednesbury — REDUCED

- A Traditional 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- UPVc Double Glazing
- No Upward Chain!
- Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £119,995
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Woden Road East, Wednesbury

- Extended 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- Gas Central Heating
- UPVc Double Glazing
- Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £110,000
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Bradshaw Avenue, Darlaston

- 3 Bedroom Semi Detached in Need of General Upgrade
- Gas Central Heating
- Cul-de-Sac Location
- UPVc Double GLazing (Where specified)

Viewing: 0121 505 3533 £64,950

Addison Street, Wednesbury

- A Modern 2 Bedroom 1st Floor Apartment
- Double Glazing
- Electric Storage Heating
- Ideally Located for Wednesbury Town Centre

OFFERS AROUND: £55,000
Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Lindley Avenue, Tipton — NEW

Traditional Semi Detached having upvc double glazing, gas central heating & offering no upward chain. Recently improved whilst briefly comprising, porch, reception hall, lounge, re-fitted kitchen / dining room, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, driveway to front / shared to side, garage & rear garden.

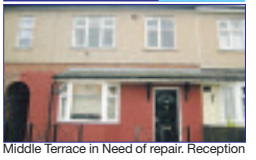
OFFERS AROUND: £117,995
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Hall Street, Tipton — NEW

Semi Detached situated on a good size plot and having upvc double glazing / gas central heating. Reception hall, lounge, sitting room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, shower room, enclosed driveway, garage, outside w.c. fore / rear gardens.

OFFERS AROUND: £129,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Coronation Road, Tipton — NEW



Middle Terrace in Need of repair. Reception hall, lounge, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, shower room, driveway to front & rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £54,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Crownmeadow Drive, Queensgate, Tipton — REDUCED

Improved End Terrace having upvc double glazing & gas central heating. Internal viewing recommended whilst briefly comprising, reception hall, lounge, conservatory, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, side driveway & rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £104,500
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Oak Close, Tipton

Purpose Built First Floor Flat having upvc double glazing and offering no upward chain. Reception area, lounge, fitted kitchen, 1 bedroom, bathroom and communal parking area.

OFFERS AROUND: £49,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Clover Piece, Tipton — NEW

Modern Semi Detached having upvc double glazing, gas central heating & quiet cul de sac location. Reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen built in oven/hob, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, 2 car parking, enclosed fore garden and rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £104,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Hopton Close, Woodford Hollow, Tipton — NEW

Modern Starter home having upvc double glazing and making an ideal first time purchase. Porch, lounge, fitted kitchen, 1 bedroom (built in wardrobes), bathroom with shower, 2 car driveway and gardens.

OFFERS AROUND: £72,500
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Brookfield Way, Tipton — NEW

Modern Detached having upvc double glazing and gas central heating. Porch, lounge, fitted breakfast kitchen with built in oven/hob, 3 bedrooms, en suite shower room, family bathroom, driveway, garage & rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £149,000
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Scott Street, Tipton — REDUCED

Modern 3 Storey Town House having upvc double glazing and gas central heating. Offering no upward chain & briefly comprising, reception hall, lounge / dining room, fitted breakfast kitchen, utility room, 3 bedrooms, 2 en suite shower rooms, study room / possible bedroom 4, family bathroom, fore / rear gardens and garage in separate block.

OFFERS AROUND: £134,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Middle Meadow, Tipton — NEW

5% DEPOSIT PAID or 80% / 20% SHARED EQUITY. Modern Ground Floor Apartment having security entrance doors, upvc double glazing and gas central heating. Reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower & allocated parking space.

OFFERS AROUND: £79,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Bankfield Road, Tipton — NEW

Traditional Semi Detached situated in a sought after location. Having upvc double glazing, gas central heating & briefly comprising, porch, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, dining room, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, driveway to front and rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £124,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Sanders Crescent, Tipton — NEW

Modern 2.5 Storey End Town House having upvc double glazing and gas central heating. Reception hall, guest cloakroom, lounge, fitted kitchen built in oven/hob, 3 double bedrooms, en suite shower room, family bathroom, side driveway, side garage and good size rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £127,500
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Shinglers Drive, Tipton — REDUCED

Modern 3 Storey Semi Detached Town House having upvc double glazing, gas central heating and cul de sac location. Well presented accommodation briefly comprises, reception hall, guest cloakroom, lounge, study room / possible bedroom 4, fitted kitchen, utility room, 3 bedrooms, en suite shower room, family bathroom, driveway, garage & rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £139,995
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Foxyards Road, Tipton — REDUCED

Detached Bungalow situated on a most sought after development and occupying an imposing corner position. Having upvc double glazing, gas central heating, no upward chain & briefly comprising, porch, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, inner hallway, 2 bedrooms, new bathroom suite, driveway, garage, additional secure parking to side, fore, side / rear gardens.

OFFERS AROUND: £109,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Manor Road, Tipton — REDUCED

Middle Terrrace having upvc double glazing (most windows), gas central heating and improved accommodation. Reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory, downstairs bathroom, 3 bedrooms, fore / rear gardens.

OFFERS AROUND: £112,000
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Dudley Road, Tipton — REDUCED

Modern Purpose Built Ground Floor Apartment having upvc double glazing, electric heating and offering no upward chain. Reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, en suite shower room, family bathroom, parking area.

OFFERS AROUND: £62,500
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Nightingale Drive, Tipton — REDUCED

Modern Purpose Built First Floor Flat having upvc double glazing, gas central heating & briefly comprising, reception hall, lounge, inner hallway, fitted kitchen built in oven / hob, 1 bedroom, shower room & garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £53,995
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

Ocker Hill Road, Tipton

14 Ocker Hill Road, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 0UN. We are acting in th sale of the above property and have received an offer of £50,000 Any interested parties must submit any highter offers to the selling agent before exchange of contracts takes place.

OFFERS AROUND: £54,950
Viewing: 0121 522 3733

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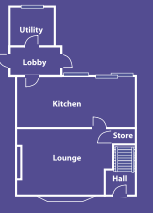

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15 Salisbury House, Lily Street, West Bromwich, B71. Ground floor studio flat, electric heating £275.00
16 Salisbury House, West Bromwich, West Midlands. 1 Bed Ground Floor Flat, electric heating £299.00
34 Camberley, Beaconveiw Road, West Bromwich, B71 2bed 4th flr flat, dg ...£350.00
4 Manifold Way, Charlemont Hall Park, Off Friar Park, 1 Bed F/f Appart £395.00
25 Moxhull Gardens, Willenhall, West Midlands, 2bed Terrace £400.00
14 Poplar Grove, West Bromwich, B70 6LB 2 Bed, Mid Terr, Ch, Dg £425.00
39 Liskeard Road, Walsall, WS5 3ES 3 BED FLAT £425.00
11 Trinity View Queen Street, Bilston, WV14 7ER 2 Bed 2nd Floor Apartment.....£430.00
19 Trinity View Queen Street, Bilston, WV14 7ER 2 Bed Flat, Dg, Electric Heating....£430.00
9 Short Street, Darlaston WS10 8BS Two Bed Mid Terraced £450.00
Flat 7 Manor Flats, High Street, Sedgley, Dudley, West 2 bed First Floor Flat, dg, elec £450.00
78 Ashley Street, Bilston, West Midlands, WV4 7NN, 2 Bed Terr, Gch,dg.....£450.00
39 Albany Crescent, Bilston, WV14 0HT 2 Bed Semi With Office / Study £450.00
16 Bell Street, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 8HZ 2 Bed Terrace £475.00
75 Ivy Road, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 9QN Three Bed Mid Terraced, Ch £475.00
29 Jefferson Place, West Bromwich, B71 4EY A First Floor Appartment £475.00
47 Wedgebury Close Wednesbury 2 Bed Ground Floor Flat £475.00
9 Johnson Road, Darlaston, Wednesbury, WS10 7NT 3 Bed Mid Terraced CH & DG £495.00
5 Deeley Drive, Tipton, DY4 7DW 2 Bed Mid Terraced With CH £495.00
363a Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 2JR £495.00
39 Lower High Street, Wednesbury, West Midlands, 2bed Flat, Refurbished.....£500.00
23 Monkgate Drive, West Bromwich, West Midlands First Floor Two Bed Appartment £525.00
96 Scott Street, Tipton, West Midlands Modern 2nd Floor Apartment £525.00
Flat 2, 63-65 Bustleholme Lane, West Bromwich, B71 2 Bed Ground Floor Flat, Ch, Dg.....£525.00
152 Waddensbrook Road, Willenhall 3 Bed Semi.....£525.00
65 Walsall Road, West Bromwich, B71 3HE 3 Bed End Terraced House....£575.00
1 Bedford Road, West Bromwich, B71 2RS 3 Bed Semi, Ch, Dg, Gardens.....£600.00
70 Appleton Avenue, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 5NA 3 Bed Semi, Ch, Dg £600.00
27 Brook Street, West Bromwich, B70 9HL 3 Bedroom Extended Detached £650.00
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- C/H & D/G
- Freehold

WAS £104,995 SALE PRICE £99,995

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- Part C/H and Part D/G
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- Off Road Parking

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WAS £119,995 SALE PRICE £117,995

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WAS £125,000 SALE PRICE £120,000

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- A Semi Dettached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- C/H & Part D/G
- No Upward Chain

WAS £99,950 SALE PRICE £99,750

COLES LANE, B71 2QL
- A Semi Detached Property
- Two Bedrooms
- C/H & D/G
- Freehold

£104,500

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- Exchange of contracts 4/6 weeks for possible completion August 2011

WAS £164,950 SALE PRICE £160,000

BUSTLEHOLME AVENUE, B71 3BA
- PRIMROSE COTTAGE is a Detached Bungalow
- Two Bedrooms
- Dining Room or Third Bedroom
- Double Garage & Parking Space

WAS £229,950 SALE £215,000

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REDUCED

MACDONALD CLOSE, OLDBURY
Situated on a popular residential development this excellently presented modern detached offers good accommodation with the benefit of gas fired central heating and double glazing. Internal inspection is highly recommended and briefly comprises reception hall, front lounge, dining area, fitted kitchen, utility, fitted cloakroom, conservatory, four bedrooms (master with en suite), house bathroom, integral garage, off street parking for at least two cars to front, freehold.
£199,950
Viewing: Oldbury Office

TAME ROAD, OLDBURY
Situated in an established neighbourhood this well presented deceptively spacious mid town house offers good accommodation with the benefit of gas fired central heating and double glazing. Full internal inspection is highly recommended and it briefly comprises reception hall, open plan lounge/dining room, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms, shower room, rear garden with vehicular access providing off street parking, freehold.
Offers based on: £119,950
Viewing: Oldbury Office

HAYES CRESCENT, OLDBURY
Forming an ideal first time purchase this well presented traditional mid town house offers good accommodation with the benefit of double glazing and gas fired central heating. Internal inspection is highly recommended and briefly comprises reception hall, front lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom, three bedrooms, off street parking to front, gardens. Freehold
Offers based on £109,500
Viewing Oldbury Office

CONSTANCE AVENUE, WEST BROMWICH
Situated in a quiet residential cul-de-sac this excellently presented extended end town house required full internal inspection to be appreciated. The property offers three bedrooms, bathroom, front lounge, rear sitting room, extended kitchen, large double garage to rear, double glazing, central heating, Freehold
Offers based on: £130,000
Viewing Oldbury Office

FAIRWAY AVENUE, OLDBURY
Situated in an established residential neighbourhood this excellently presented semi detached residence offers good accommodation with the benefit of gas fired central heating and double glazing. Full internal inspection is highly recommended and briefly comprises reception hall, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, side verandah leading to side passageway to toilet and utility, three good sized bedrooms, bathroom, off street parking to front, good sized garden and garage to rear. Freehold.
Offers based on: £115,000
Viewing Oldbury Office

BARKER STREET, OLDBURY
This deceptively spacious traditional style mid villa offers good family accommodation with the benefit of double glazing and gas fired central heating. In recent years it has undergone grant work and briefly comprises hall, two reception rooms, kitchen, lobby, bathroom, three bedrooms, garden. Freehold.
Offers based on £114,950
Viewing: Oldbury Office

BRENNAND ROAD
Exceptionally well presented freehold semi detached residence offering immaculate gas centrally heated and double glazeing and includes three bedrooms, two with fitted furniture, fully tiled and appointed bathroom, dining room well proportioned lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory and low maintenance gardens with an impressive gazebo, off street parking for two/three cars, workshop and garden store, downstairs WC, with the added benefit of an open outlook to the front over the local primary school and its playing fields.
Offers based on £164,950
Viewing: Bearwood Office

THE HORSESHOE
Located in this popular area, this semi-detached property offers gas centrally heated and PVC double glazed accommodation to include two double bedrooms, fully tiled bathroom, hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, verandah, workshop with potential for other uses, neatly laid out south-facing garden and having the benefit of off-street parking to the front, with comprehensive day-to-day amenities close at hand.
Offers based on £129,950
Viewing: Bearwood Office

MERRIVALE ROAD
Occupying a pleasant residential location just off the main Bearwood Road, a traditional freehold villa residence with gas centrally heated accommodation to include two double bedrooms, bathroom, hall, two living rooms, kitchen and gardens, having comprehensive day-to-day amenities close at hand but being in need of general improvement.
Offers based on £114,950
Viewing Bearwood Office

REDUCED

MONMOUTH ROAD, BEARWOOD
A freehold, spacious, traditional detached, to include seven bedrooms, with master bedroom having en suite bathroom and six additional good size bedrooms, fully tiled shower room, porch, hall, lounge, separate dining room, fitted open plan dining/kitchen, laundry, off-street parking and mature gardens, located in a sought-after residential thoroughfare close to Warley Woods / main Hagley Road West, with comprehensive amenities close at hand and easy access to Birmingham Centre.
Offers based on £425,000
Viewing Bearwood Office

BOWDEN ROAD, SMETHWICK
Situated in a pleasant established neighbourhood convenient for comprehensive day to day amenities, a traditional style freehold villa residence offering gas central heated and part PVC double glazed accommodation to include two double bedrooms and bathroom to the first floor, two reception rooms and kitchen downstairs, together with garden to the rear, having High Street amenities close at hand and ideally suited for first time buyers.
£104,950
Viewing: Bearwood Office

ARDEN ROAD
Located in a popular established residential area close to the main high street in Smethwick, a traditional style freehold Villa residence offering gas central heated and double glazed accommodation to include three bedrooms, upstairs wc, hall, lounge, separate sitting room, good size kitchen, fully tiled shower room and gardens and being within easy reach of comprehensive day to day amenities.
Offers based on £114,500
Viewing: Bearwood Office

BLEAKHOUSE ROAD
Occupying a most convenient location just off the main Wolverhampton Road close to good day to day amenities, a traditional style freehold semi detached residence offering gas centrally heated and double glazed accommodation to include three bedrooms, bathroom with shower, hall, lounge, separate dining room, refitted kitchen and excellent conservatory, together with gardens, ample garage space at rear and being ideal for first time purchasers.
Offers based on: £132,500
Viewing: Bearwood Office

RAWLINGS ROAD, BEARWOOD
A pleasantly situated and extremely well presented traditional style freehold villa residence located in this popular neighbourhood within easy reach of Bearwood High Street, offering gas centrally heated and PVC double glazed accommodation to include three bedrooms, two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom and garden to the rear, being ideally suited for first time buyers.
Offers based on £118,950
Viewing: Bearwood Office

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German company is set to make 1,911 special editions of its celebrated 911 sports car

Iconic Porsche is back in black

Distinctive black paintwork and 19-inch forged alloy wheels emphasise the timeless exterior design of the Porsche 911 Carrera

IT'S BACK in black: The iconic Porsche 911 is to be available in just 1,911 examples worldwide.

It is painted in plain black as standard, with Basalt Black metallic available as an option.

The electric-folding hood of the Cabriolet model is trimmed in black cloth. Exterior highlights are provided by the 19-inch 911 Turbo II forged alloy wheels, the glossy metallic appearance of which perfectly complements the discreet elegance of these 911 models.

In addition, the wheel rims provide an unobstructed view of the brake discs which are naturally paired with black-finished, four-piston aluminium monobloc fixed callipers.

Lettering

Black lettering on the stainless steel door entry guards identifies each 'Black Edition', and provides a first hint of the high-quality interior design with its focus on pure sports car values.

Inside, the colour theme of the exterior continues with a black leather interior, and facing the driver is a thick-rimmed SportDesign steering wheel.

The instrument cluster naturally remains in black. On the glove compartment lid, a badge testifies to the limited production run of the 911 Black Edition.

By way of contrast, the decorative fascia strip, gear lever and air vents are finished in aluminium-look paint.

Together with the characteristic exhaust note of the flat-six 3.6-litre engine, a further acoustic highlight of the 911 Black Edition is the BOSE Surround Sound-System that is fitted as standard.

This was specially co-ordinated with the interior of the 911 Carrera and comprises 13 loudspeakers (12 in the Cabriolet) including an active subwoofer and central speaker as well as a seven channel digital amplifier.

Also standard on the Black Edition models is satellite navigation, and a universal audio interface in the central console storage compartment that enables an MP3 player to be connected to the audio.

Every 911 Black Edition also features rear ParkAssist, cruise control, automatic dimming anti-dazzle interior and exterior mirrors, and rain-sensing windscreen wipers.

The technology of the 911 Black Edition conforms to the Carrera standard. Under the rear lid is to be found the typical Carrera flat-six cylinder engine, producing 345hp at 6,500 rpm from 3,614cc.

Coupled with the six-speed gearbox, this output delivers a top speed of 180 mph in both body versions. At its maximum acceleration, the Coupé reaches 62 mph in 4.9 seconds, the Cabriolet in 5.1 seconds. Combined with such impressive performance figures are remarkably moderate running costs; the 911 Black Series Coupé, for example, returns 27.4mpg on the combined cycle.

The 911 Black Edition enjoys the same technical special equipment options that are offered for all Carrera models.

First and foremost is the Porsche-Doppelkupplungsgetriebe (PDK) double-clutch gearbox. A 911 Carrera with PDK turns in record performances thanks to the seven ratios and quick gear changes achieved with no interruption to the power flow. Fuel consumption is 29.4 mpg and 28.5 mpg for the closed and open-top 911 respectively.

Gearshift

With PDK, the Coupé accomplishes the sprint in only 4.7 seconds, the Cabrio in 4.9 seconds. Responsiveness can also be further enhanced by the optional Sport Chrono Plus package. It features the additional 'Launch Control' function with fast gearshifts, shaving a further 0.2 seconds off the acceleration times of vehicles equipped with PDK.

The sportiness and comfort of the 911 Black Edition can be enhanced further if so desired.

For example, the Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) and as an additional option for the Coupé, the PASM with sports chassis lowered by 20 mm and mechanical rear limited slip differential.

To further optimise braking performance, Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes (PCCB) are also available at extra cost.

The 911 Black Edition goes on sale in April, priced from £67,270 for the Coupé and £74,958 for the Cabriolet – the same price as the standard 911 Carreras.

The cabrio has an electric folding roof

Chrome and silver offset the black cabin

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FIAT 500C ABARTH 1.4

ROAD TE

Eye-catching Italian with an edge

SOMETIMES it takes a clever piece of technology or simply a particular engine to make you look at a car in a different light.

In the case of Fiat's 500, the Italian firm's Twinair two-cylinder petrol engine is a revelation.

Delivering low emissions and fuel consumption with the energy and character of its pioneering predecessor, the two-pot 500 is a joy to drive.

At the other end of the performance spectrum is the 500C Abarth. Fans of the 500 will instantly be familiar with the Abarth's go-faster connotations. In a nutshell, the tuning sub-brand offers affordable sporting thrills thanks to a range of well judged upgrades – not a million miles from Abarth's roots.

The Abarth has an 'edgy' character

The car has a semi-automatic gearbox

Fiat's 'pocket rocket' 500C Abarth has stylish, retro looks and is huge fun on the road

Concept

The 500 Abarth isn't an entirely new concept. You've been able to buy such a car for some time. What hasn't been possible until recently was to buy one in convertible form. As if a 140 horsepower 500 wasn't decadent enough, Fiat have cut the roof off.

Strictly speaking the 500C boasts a roll back roof, as the car retains the door frame structure of its tin-top relative. This fabric cover can be electrically wound back the car's full length, includes a heated glass screen and offers near-hatchback levels of refinement when in place.

Somehow, even though a hatchback Abarth exists, it's hard not to be charmed by the 500C model and its enhanced features. Certainly, with the roof down, it's easier to hear the car's feisty engine thanks in part to a pair of oversize exhaust pipes.

Those pipes join a modest but purposeful bodykit, chunky steering wheel, supportive sports seats, stylish alloy wheels and, crucially, retuned suspension settings. Ah yes, the main reason for buying the 500C Abarth is its performance potential. And while it won't worry the genuine hot hatchbacks occupying higher price points, the usable and accessible nature of this 500's performance is not to be sneezed at.

The 1.4-litre turbo petrol motor might produce "only" 140 horsepower, but in a car this size that's plenty. This rev-happy engine snarls its way along, emitting a buzzy, impatient sound that's highly addictive.

In an unusual move, the 500C Abarth comes with a semi-auto gearbox complete with steering wheel paddleshifters.

It's unusual for two reasons: Such technology isn't cheap, yet Fiat has managed to position the car competitively, plus this technology always divides opinion. Luddites will bemoan the lack of a clutch pedal – the 500's gearbox is essentially a manual 'box with the clutch action controlled electronically.

In practice, leaving the car in Auto mode does require the driver to second-guess shift points and feather the throttle accordingly. And, yes, that does take practice. However, stick the car in manual mode and you have full control over gearchanges. This is by far a more rewarding experience, and it doesn't take long before you're zipping up and down the gears with those deliciously weighted paddles.

Better still is the car's Sport mode, which adds more weight to the steering and sharpens the combined responses of the engine and gearbox.

Frankly, this can be left engaged all the time; far from turning the 500C into a temperamental trackday monster the sharper responses are welcome. Gearchanges feel crisper and there's an audible change in the 500's exhaust note, giving it a 'big car' sound.

Rewarding

In short, the car is a hoot to drive. The 500C Abarth growls and screams its way from gear to gear, corner to corner. For a small car with sports suspension its ride is supple, too.

On a basic level the 500C Abarth displays an edgy character that the regular, cute 500 lacks. Not everyone wants a bulging bodykit and a beefy exhaust, which is why so many regular 500s have found homes. But that 'edge' is precisely what the 500 needs to appeal to a section of the public seeking a fun, small car with talent.

It's easy for car makers to bolt on go-faster bits to create the illusion of enhanced performance. Fiat has done a thorough job with this 500C – something of which Abarth fans can be proud.

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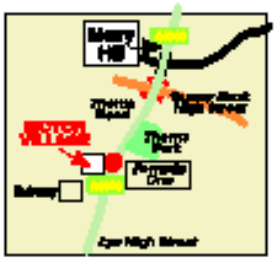

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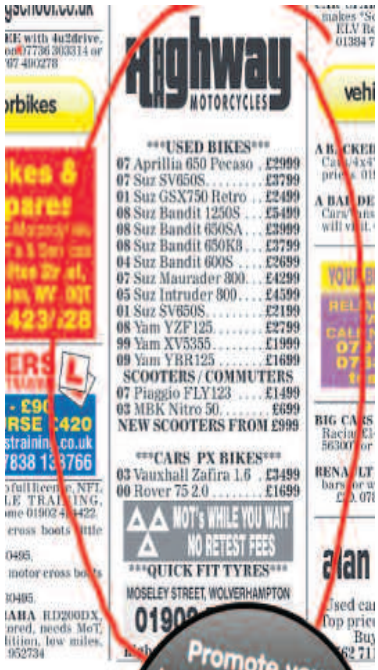

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LOOK

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At 12 noon.
Between Junctions 12 and 13 of the M6. Involving a Silver Kia Sportage 4x4 and blue Peugeot 206.
Will anyone who may have seen anything please contact
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Admission 20p.

JUMBLE SALE
Charlemont Methodist Church,
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Saturday February 5th
2.30pm
Admission 10p

pets corner

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Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a
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1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with its Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

NOTICE TO READERS
Potential purchasers of puppies or kittens are strongly recommended to see the puppy/kitten in its home environment with its parent/parents.

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HGV SERVICE ENGINEERS required by National Refuse Vehicle hire company to carry out servicing, inspections and daily defects for a vehicle fleet based in Wednesbury. Candidates must be qualified mechanics with good experience and able to work under own initiative. To apply please contact: Julie Robinson on 0121 567 3600 or send a CV to julie.robinson@phoenixvehiclehire.com

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nursing & carers

TIPTON HOMECARE LTD require Community Care Staff in Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. Must be honest, trustworthy and reliable and committed to training. All Applicants are subject to references and a CRB Check. Own transport preferred but not essential.
Please contact Stuart Higgins, 0121 557 3649.

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SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF SANDWELL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER NO. 10) 2011

The Borough Council of Sandwell in exercise of the powers under Sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell) Order 2000 has made an Order which will have the effect of:-

1. Changing a short stay car park to a long stay car park which is situated off Queen Street/Walsall Street, West Bromwich;

The effect of this will be to permit the maximum waiting time to 24 hours with no return within 4 hours, from the existing maximum period of 4 hours.

2. Including in the list of Off Street Parking Places the long stay car park to be known as Tesco Development Area 1 - Area 6 and will be located within the boundary of the Tesco Development Site (Greenhills Ringway, New Street, West Bromwich Ringway and Reform Street)

Waiting time will be limited to 24 hours with no return within 4 hours.

3. The following charges will apply to 1 and 2 above on Mondays to Saturdays between 8.00 am to 6.00 pm:-

a.	up to 1 hour	40p
b.	up to 2 hours	80p
c.	up to 3 hours	£1.20
d.	up to 4 hours	£1.60
e.	all day	£2.00
f.	one month season ticket	£40.00
g.	twelve month season ticket	£400.00

The Order was made on the 1st February 2011 and shall come into operation on 14th February 2011.

A copy of the Order, a Statement of Reasons for making the Order and plans showing the locations of the car parks subject to change and the new car parks, may be examined at the Office of Director of Legal and Governance Services, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 3DE between the hours of 9.00 am - 5.00 pm on Mondays to Thursdays and between the hours of 9.00 am - 4.30 pm on Fridays.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or of any provision contained in it on the ground that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or on the ground that any requirement of the Act or that any regulation made thereunder has not been complied with in relation to the Order may within 6 weeks from 1st February 2011 apply to the High Court for that purpose.

Dated this 3rd day of February 2011

N SHARMA
Director of Legal and Governance Services
Sandwell Council House
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 3DE

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF SANDWELL (PARK LANE EAST, TIPTON) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2011

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Borough Council of Sandwell has made an Order, the effect of which will be to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in Park Lane East, Tipton, from its junction with Carnegie Avenue to its junction with Station Street.
2. The alternative route for vehicles will be via Victoria Road, Coneygree Road, Sedgley Road East, Dudley Port, Horseley Heath, Lower Church Lane and vice versa.
3. The purpose and reason for the Order is to facilitate a safety and structural examination of the Park Lane East railway bridge.
4. The Order will take effect on Sunday 27th February 2011, and it is anticipated that the works may commence on that day between the hours of 8.00am and 3.00pm. The works are expected to be completed on the same day. However, the Order may continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months, or until the works in connection with the Order have been completed, whichever is the sooner.
5. Any queries about the works to take place should be directed to Mel Speight of Carillion Site Services telephone number 01924 372 957. Any queries about the effect of the order on traffic using the highway should be directed to Keith Sansom, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, Environment House, Lombard Street, West Bromwich, B70 8RU (Telephone 0121 569 4149).

DATED this 3rd day of February 2011

N SHARMA
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Sandwell Council House
Oldbury
West Midlands

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF SANDWELL (PEAR TREE ROAD, GREAT BARR) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2011

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Borough Council of Sandwell has made an Order, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 14 and 15 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which will be to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in Pear Tree Road from the point it meets with Pear Tree Drive to its junction with Pear Tree Close, Great Barr.
2. The alternative route for vehicles will be via Pear Tree Drive, Pear Tree Road and vice versa.
3. The purpose and reason for the Order is to facilitate the replacement of a heavy duty manhole.
4. The Order will take effect on 21st February 2011, and it is anticipated that the works may commence on that day. The works are expected to be completed on the same day. The Order may continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months, or until the works in connection with the Order have been completed, whichever is the sooner.
5. Any queries about the works to take place should be directed to Lee Cooper of Severn Trent Water on telephone number 02476 478047. Any queries about the effect of the order on traffic using the highway should be directed to Keith Sansom, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, Environment House, Lombard Street, West Bromwich, B70 8RU (Telephone 0121 569 4149).

DATED this 3rd day of February 2011

N SHARMA

Director of Legal and Governance Services
Sandwell Council House
Oldbury
West Midlands

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF SANDWELL (A34 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, GREAT BARR) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES) ORDER 2011

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Borough Council of Sandwell intends, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 14 and 15 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, not less than seven days from the date of this Notice, to make an Order, the effect of which will be to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in part of the northbound and southbound carriageways of the A34 Birmingham Road, Great Barr, as detailed in two phases below:-

(a) Phase One
To prohibit vehicles from proceeding at the A34 Birmingham Road northbound access to the M6 (Junction 7) gyratory from the main northbound carriageway, and
(b) Phase Two
To prohibit vehicles from proceeding into the A34 Birmingham Road southbound carriageway from the exit from M6 (Junction 7) gyratory.

2. The alternative route for vehicles will be as follows:-
(a) Phase One
Traffic wishing to access the M6 will be diverted via Birmingham Road, Sargent's Hill, Birmingham Road, Broadway, Broadway West, Wallows Lane and Bescott Road, where the M6 may be accessed via junction 9 at this point.. Vehicles wishing to exit from frontages in Lochranza Croft will be permitted to travel in a southerly direction in the northbound carriageway during the closure, to allow access onto the A34 Birmingham Road.
(b) Phase Two
Traffic wishing to access the A34 Birmingham Road will be diverted via M6 (Junction 7) gyratory, Birmingham Road, Sargent's Hill, Birmingham Road, Broadway, Broadway West, Wallows Lane and Bescott Road. The M6 may be accessed via Junction 9 or vehicles may be redirected to Birmingham at this point.

3. The purpose and reason for the Order is to facilitate repairs to the Abbotsford Avenue footbridge by Barhale Construction.

4. The Order will take effect on 14th February 2011, and it is anticipated that the works may commence on that day. The works are expected to be completed in two phases, as follows:
(a) Phase One
Between Monday 14th February 2011 and Friday 18th February 2011, and
(b) Phase Two
Between Monday 7th March 2011 and Friday 11th March 2011.
It is anticipated that the works will be carried out at nighttime only, between the hours of midnight and 6.00am, and be completed by 11th March 2011. However, the Order may continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months, or until the works in connection with the Order have been completed, whichever is the sooner.

5. Any queries about the works to take place should be directed to Steve Scrivens telephone number 0121 569 4142. Any queries about the effect of the order on traffic using the highway should be directed to Keith Sansom, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, Environment House, Lombard Street, West Bromwich, B70 8RU (Telephone 0121 569 4149).

DATED this 3rd day of February 2011

N SHARMA
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Sandwell Council House
Oldbury, West Midlands

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Richard Owens trading as Richard Owens Transport of 3 Elm Avenue, Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 9[illegible] is applying for a licence to use Unit 6 [illegible] Business Park, 204 Oldbury Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 9DE as an operating centre for FOUR goods vehicles and NIL trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF SANDWELL (A457 DUDLEY ROAD, OLDBURY) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2011

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Borough Council of Sandwell has made an Order, the effect of which will be to temporarily prohibit any vehicle proceeding in the A457 westbound carriageway of the Dudley Road, Oldbury, at its junction with Oldbury Ringway.
2. The alternative route for vehicles wishing to travel in a westbound direction will be via Oldbury Ringway, West Bromwich Street, Roway Lane and Dudley Road East. Eastbound traffic will be unaffected.
3. The purpose and reason for the Order is to facilitate work to the sewer system.
4. The Order will take effect on Monday 7th February 2011, and it is anticipated that the works may commence on that day. The works are expected to be completed on Monday 28th February 2011. The Order may continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months, or until the works in connection with the Order have been completed, whichever is the sooner.
5. Any queries about the works to take place should be directed to Malcolm Taylor of Severn Trent Water on telephone number 07769 881 827. Any queries about the effect of the order on traffic using the highway should be directed to Keith Sansom, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, Environment House, Lombard Street, West Bromwich, B70 8RU (Telephone 0121 569 4149).

DATED this 3rd day of February 2011

N SHARMA
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Sandwell Council House
Oldbury
West Midlands

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF SANDWELL (WALSALL STREET, WEDNESBURY) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2011

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Borough Council of Sandwell has made an Order, the effect of which will be to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding in Walsall Street, Wednesbury, at its junctions with

(a) High Bullen
(b) Church Hill
(c) Upper High Street/Market Place

2. Throughout the duration of this Order, the provisions of paragraph 4 of Article 1 of the County Borough of West Bromwich (Wednesbury Town Centre) (Various Roads) (One-Way Traffic) Order, 1970 shall be suspended which will have the effect of enabling traffic to travel in both directions in that part of Walsall Street from its junction with High Bullen to its junction with Upper High Street/Market Place where access is required to frontages on that road.
3. The purpose and reason for the Order is to facilitate essential resurfacing works.
4. The Order will take effect on Sunday 6th March 2011, and it is anticipated that the works may commence on that day. The works are expected to be completed on Sunday 13th March 2011. It is anticipated that the works will be undertaken on Sundays only between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm. However, the Order may continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months, or until the works in connection with the Order have been completed, whichever is the sooner.
5. Any queries about the works to take place should be directed to Nigel Underwood telephone number 0121 569 4157. Any queries about the effect of the order on traffic using the highway should be directed to Keith Sansom, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, Environment House, Lombard Street, West Bromwich, B70 8RU (Telephone 0121 569 4149).

DATED this 3rd day of February 2011

N SHARMA
Director of Legal and Governance Services
Sandwell Council House
Oldbury
West Midlands

BERYL TAYLOR (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named deceased, late of Park House, 15 Park Road [illegible], who died on [illegible], are required to send particulars in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before [illegible], after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice. [illegible]

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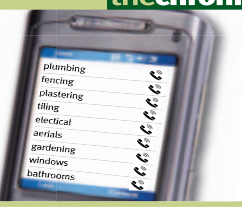

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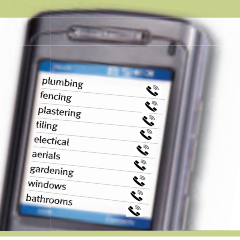

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Tipton are on the march as victory takes them second

COVENTRY SPHINX 1
TIPTON•TOWN 2

A GOAL early in each half was enough to return Tipton to winning ways. The home side set up a nervy last few minutes when they reduced the deficit goal eight minutes from time but the visitors held out for the three points which takes them up to second in the Midland Alliance table.

The game had passed an early pitch inspection and although the the playing surface remained hard in places it was perfectly playable and both sides played their part in an entertaining afternoon's football.

Tipton gave a debut to Marcus Jackson, who signed on the morning of the game, Alex Cowley switched to left-back while Jozsef Jakab started up front with Lee Osbourne.

The home side were depleted with a couple of suspensions and injuries leaving them slightly light on numbers.

It was Tipton who started the brighter and they could have taken the lead inside two minutes. Jakab was given time and space for a shot which was saved by Tom Bryce.

The opening goal wasn't long in coming as Tipton nosed in front with just five minutes on the clock. John Hill's cross from the right-hand side picked out Ricky Baker at the back post and the winger headed home his ninth goal of the season.

The home side responded with Andrew Williams getting away but he fired his shot over the bar. Back came Tipton with chances to extend their lead. Hill was off target after neatly collecting a loose ball 25 yards from goal.

Post

Baker came close to adding his and Tipton's second soon after, some neat footwork taking him inside Luke Hopkins with his shot beating the keeper but smacking against post.

Danny Bragoli was off target after he fashioned a chance on the edge of the penalty area, while on the stroke of half-time Dave Bate threatened but was denied as Bryce got down well to save.

Again Sphinx conceded within five minutes of start of the half. Debutant Jackson displayed some silky footwork to skip past Tom Muldoon and Chris Long before delivering a perfect centre which found Osbourne who made no mistake from close range – his fourth goal in five games since his recent switch from Halesowen Town.

Osbourne almost added his second just three minutes later but fired over the top as Tipton continued to create plenty of chances.

Baker somehow failed to grab his second and Tipton's third just after the hour mark when his header struck the post and in the scramble that followed Bryce was able to hang onto the loose ball.

Still Tipton pressed as they sought to make the game safe. Jakab's neat shot on the turn was saved by the keeper and Bragoli fired over the top from the edge of the box.

The game wasn't over and Sphinx showed their fighting spirit with seven minutes to play. Williams picked the ball up midway inside the Tipton half and threaded a pss through to Aaron Donaldson who found the bottom corner of the net with a fine finish.

Tipton remained in control and didn't allow the home side a further attempt on goal.

Trumpeter leads the comeback

BUSTLEHOLME 4 DUDLEY•SPORTS 2

BUSTLEHOLME took on Dudley Sports gunning for revenge after suffering one of only two defeats all season at the hands of their visitors back in August.

The hosts made hard work of clinching victory despite playing some decent football as they battled back from a two-goal deficit.

Bustleholme found themselves trailing at half-time after gifting a brace of goals to Kevin Vogely.

A change of keepers for the home side during the interval saw Jake Bedford making his debut between the posts although in truth he didn't have a save to make as Bustleholme dominated.

Bustleholme dragged themselves back into the contest on 70 minutes when an Ash Grainger corner found Mark Willet who finished well. Another half time substitute changed the game in the 82nd minute. After good work from Connor Scott sub Ryan Trumpeter lashed home a 25-yard piledriver. The comeback was complete three minutes later when Willet's free-kick was nodded across the box by Darren Leonard for Trumpeter to head in his second. Bustleholme sealed the win when Leonard found Matty Jukes at the far post and he confidently fired home.

IN BRIEF

RUGBY UNION:
IN-FORM Birmingham Barbarians first XV extended their winning run in the Midland Merit League with another close fought victory, 26-20 over Wheaton Aston.

Once again the Barbarians started slowly with defensive slips leading to early unconverted tries for the opposition. Before the break the Barbarians hit back with a well worked try from Gareth Lister and a controversial touchdown from Sean Rudd. Lee Lamburn converted both to give the Babas a 14-10 half-time advantage. That lead was extended with powerhouse prop Sam Swancutt storming through for his third try in as many games. Lamburn's conversion made it 21-10 but Wheaton Aston got the nerves jangling with two unconverted tries to make it 21-20. A late Danny Higgs try from a tap penalty secured the points for the Barbarians.

SPEEDWAY:
SWEDISH international Daniel Nermark is Birmingham's latest signing for the new era of Elite League racing at Perry Barr.

The 33-year-old has not raced full-time in Britain since starring for Workington in the Premier League in 2008. He's agreed terms to link up with Krzysztof Kasprzak, Danny King, James Wright, Claus Vissing, and doubling-up stars Ben Barker and Rene Bach at Perry Barr.

Brummies boss Graham Drury said: "He's a good rider who can do a solid job for Birmingham Speedway. He had a fine 2010 season which made me think he is ready to return to the Elite League and everything was agreed quickly. On his day he can beat anyone in this league."

DUDLEY Heathens have made Wolverhampton's Monmore Green Stadium their temporary home for the 2011 season. They will race in the National League on Tuesday nights, starting with the Travel Plus Trophy against the USA Tourists on Tuesday, April 12.

Pires puts Rovers to the sword

Rovers' Michel Salgado and keeper Paul Robinson are unable to stop Clark's header hitting the net

THE LEGS may have gone and there are a few grey streaks but Robert Pires had some of his old swagger back and at last produced a display in a Villa shirt worthy of his reputation.

For the first time since his arrival on a free transfer in November the veteran French-man resembled something like the football impresario which had mesmerised defences while he was at Arsenal.

Having won the competition three times as a player with the Gunners, perhaps the FA Cup brings the best out in Pires.

More than likely, though, it was the time and space he was allowed by Blackburn which enabled him to thrive and help compatriot Gerard Houllier to his third consecutive win in all competitions.

The 37-year-old no longer has the legs to play out wide so it was in an advanced playmaker position behind a trio of Villa forwards – D'Artagnan and the three musketeers – that he was able to influence the game.

Up until this point there had been many questioning the wisdom of bringing in Pires – not least a number of players in the Villa squad who were privately baffled at the signing of a player who looked so chronically off the pace at training.

Indeed Pires' greatest contribution up until this point had been to make comments to the French media about apparent dressing room unrest.

One of the sticking points of Houllier's regime has also been an insistence that his players move to the West Midlands area, although Pires has been afforded special treatment.

Upon signing, the veteran winger was granted dispensation to commute to London in a special chauffeur driven car, fitted out with all of the latest luxuries and gadgets to keep him happy for his frequent trips up and down the motorway.

He still sauntered around the pitch like he was on a wine-tasting trip in his homeland but this time there was

VILLA 3
BLACKBURN 1

an end product to much of what he attempted and he linked up brilliantly with the equally impressive Barry Bannan.

It would be an exaggeration to say Pires inspired Villa to victory over an average Blackburn side but for a native of Reims – home of some of some of the largest producers of champagne in France – he uncorked a vintage finish with a spectacular half-volley from the edge of the box.

It may have been the champagne moment in the game but on a cold afternoon in Aston the bottle of bubbly for the man of the match firmly belonged to Ciaran Clark whose reputation is enhanced with every passing week.

Anticipation

He returned to his favoured position of centre-back and at times it barely looked like he broke sweat so good was his reading of the game.

The most impressive thing about Clark is his anticipation and cool head which buys him those vital extra few seconds to play a clever pass or make that key interception. He just never seems rushed.

Houllier made six changes from the side which claimed a 2-1 win over Wigan and selected a combination of Dad's Army and the Boy Scouts as he blended youth with experience.

Luckily Villa raced into a 3-1 lead so the only time Corporal Jones' infamous catchphrase "don't panic" was needed was the final 27 minutes after Nathan Baker was shown a red card.

The 19-year-old defender's tackle reflected the over-eagerness and inexperience of youth rather than being deliberately malicious – indeed Houllier's response might have been similar to that of Captain Mainwaring's to Private Pike.

It is a shame that Baker will now sit out a three-match ban because as he followed up a confident performance against Wigan last week with an equally adept display.

Up until that point he would probably have been in with a chance of keeping his place in the team – if not certainly the squad – for the trip to Manchester United.

Now he may find his opportunities blocked by others when he completes his ban.

After a subdued start in front of a depleted crowd Villa broke the deadlock when Bannan delivered a dangerous corner to the back post.

Clark escaped his marker and powerfully headed the ball past Rovers goalkeeper Paul Robinson and into the net to claim his fourth goal of the season.

Blackburn immediately responded moments later when Junior Hoilett forced Brad Friedel, who was dueto become Villa's oldest-ever player against Manchester United on Tuesday evening, to make a smart save from a tight angle.

Rovers were able to make their short spell of pressure count moments later though when Michel Salgado was played in by Hoilett.

The Spanish full-back cut the ball back from the byline and Nikola Kalinic – who had only replaced the injured Roque Santa Cruz moments earlier – finished from close range with Friedel unable to claw the ball back from behind the line.

Villa regained their composure as the game wore on and they reclaimed the lead after Nathan Delfouneso knocked the ball down into the path of Pires who struck a sweet half-volley past Robinson from the edge of the box.

Villa took the sting out of the game, though, when they added a third after a superb move which saw Baker picked out on the left flank.

The young defender whipped in an early ball which picked out Delfouneso and he made no mistake to head past Robinson.

Both sides were much tighter at the back straight after the half-time interval and the game became a much scrappier affair which culminated in the sending off of Baker. The young defender lunged at Hoilett and referee Lee Probert showed no hesitation in giving him an early bath.

Villa were comfortably able to snuff out Blackburn's attempts at a comeback in the remainder of the game to keep up their record of knocking the Lancashire side out of both the FA Cup and League Cup for the past two seasons.

TALKING POINT

EMPTY SEATS:
No-one likes an early kick-off but only 26,067 fans – with a 1,000 of those coming from Blackburn – turned up at Villa Park on Saturday.

The gate was a whopping 10,000 down from the game against Manchester City. Perhaps Villa fans are just fed of cup games against Blackburn having now faced them four times in the past two years in the FA Cup and the League Cup.

Or with such an emphasis placed on the Premier League by managers, players and the media alike has the FA Cup also lost its appeal to match-going supporters?

Next two games...

FULHAM (H) FEB 5
Hopefully a home banker for Villa with Mark Hughes' side having won just one game on the road all season.

BLACKPOOL (A) FEB 12
Likely to be dominated by matters off the pitch and Gerard Houllier will be keen to get one over on Ian Holloway.

Robert Pires (right) is all smiles after netting Villa's second

Loan star – Michael Bradley

Villa get US star on loan

ASTON Villa have signed Michael Bradley on loan from Borussia Moenchengladbach until the end of the season.

The 23-year-old midfielder has passed a medical and should be available to play once he has been given a visa and international clearance.

Villa say they have an option to make the United States international's move permanent at the end of the season.

Manager Gerard Houllier said: "Michael is is a very hard-working midfielder who can score goals and is versatile."

Bradley joined Moenchengladbach in August 2008 and scored 10 goals in 76 appearances in the German Bundesliga. He has 50 international caps and played against England at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Bradley's first club in European football was Dutch side Heerenveen, who he joined from Major League Soccer outfit Metrostars in January 2006.

Aston Villa midfielder Isaiah Osbourne has joined Sheffield Wednesday on loan until the end of the season.

The 23-year-old, a Villa youth product, has made 30 first-team appearances for the Premier League side. He previously had loan spells at Championship sides Nottingham Forest and Middlesbrough.

sport

Style was the key for Vela

CAROLE Vela hailed Albion as a 'mini Arsenal' as the 21-year-old forward revealed Albion's style of play was what convinced him to join them ahead of three other Premier League clubs, including Bolton.

"I decided to come here because this club try to play good football and always try to attack and win every game," said Vela.

"That's why I preferred to come here. It is very similar (to Arsenal) with the formation with three strikers. West Brom try to play good football and that's good for me and for everyone."

And Vela revealed how Albion's 3-2 win at The Emirates Stadium, in which Vela played as a substitute, left an impression on him.

"This team play very well and can win in every single stadium," he said.

The Baggies ended the January transfer window with Vela as their only new signing. They enquired about Chelsea striker Daniel Sturridge but he chose a loan move to Bolton.

Brazil-born Italy international Amauri was another target but he opted to stay in Italy, moving from Juventus to Palma.

Chelsea refused to let defender Jeffrey Bruma leave Stamford Bridge.

Baggies beat rivals to sign Mexican ace

New Baggies loan signing Carlos Vela checks in at The Hawthorns

ALBION pulled off a major transfer coup after completing a late-night raid on Arsenal for Carlos Vela.

The Baggies have signed the 21-year-old Mexico international on loan for the rest of the season, beating competition from Premier League rival Bolton and Spanish club Valencia.

Boss Roberto Di Matteo said: "Carlos is an exciting signing for this club. Carlos is a new attacking option for us who can play both centrally and in the wide areas.

"He also has great technical ability and pace and we're hoping he can make a big impact during the remainder of the season.

"There's no doubt Carlos has the potential to become a great player and it will hopefully be a win-win situation, where we help him by giving him game time while he helps us achieve our goal.

Young

"Having said all that, we have to remember he is still a young boy learning his trade and we will be giving him all the support he needs during his time here."

Bolton had been seen as favourites to sign Vela after his Gunners team-mate Jack Wilshere enjoyed a productive loan spell at the Reebok Stadium last season.

But the Baggies convinced the player and Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger that he would gain more match action at The Hawthorns.

The 5ft 10in forward, who played in last summer's World Cup for Mexico, has been given the No.18 shirt.

He started three games for Arsenal this season and netted three times – twice against Braga in the Champions League.

He has scored nine times in 33 senior games for Mexico but is currently serving a six-month ban for his role in a late-night party after a friendly win over Columbia.

He will not be eligible to face his parent club when they visit Albion on March 19.

As Vela checked in at The Hawthorns, Reuben Reid ended his unhappy Baggies spell by joining Oldham on a permanent deal for a nominal fee.

Hard times will make me better, says boss

Roberto Di Matteo:"I have to fight for or earn everything I have in my life"

ROBERTO Di Matteo claims Albion's mid-season slide will make him a better boss.

The Baggies head coach has seen his side lose seven of their last eight Premier League matches to slip into relegation trouble, going into Albion's clash with Wigan at The Hawthorns on Tuesday, which took place aftr The Chronicle went to press.

But Di Matteo insists he will remain strong as he attempts to turn around Albion's fortunes.

"It is obvious I don't like to lose and it's a lonely place as a manager when you do lose," he said.

"But it also makes you see situations from a different light that you wouldn't look at when you're always winning.

Experience

"The wins and the defeats have been an experience.

"I wouldn't say it's always been a good experience, because I don't like to lose, but it's been an experience."

He continued: "I was never expecting us to be competing in the top four so I prepared myself for this at the beginning, when everybody was going on about Europe and all that.

"I always said our aim was to remain in the Premier League and nothing changed.

"We were happy with the early points. It was important to get them because we knew we might have a bad spell.

"But it's not just us, there are plenty of other teams that have had one and I kind of prepared myself at the start of the season for that and it's about how we react to it.

"My attitude has always been that I have to fight for or earn everything I have in my life and that's my mentality and what I continue to do."

Fighter gets a second crack at Midlands title

SECOND chances don't come along too often in boxing.

But after suffering title heartbreak, Coseley's Jamie Ball is determined to make the most of his next crack at the Midlands light welterweight crown.

By his own admission, Ball's Christmas was "ruined" when the unbeaten 26-year-old took on Kieron Gray for the vacant title at Birmingham's Holiday Inn.

Ball and Telford's Gray – in his final fight before hanging up his gloves – went toe-to-toe over 10 rounds in a compelling contest which, after a controversial knockdown scored against Ball in the last round – ended in a draw.

It was the second time in as many years a battle for the belt had failed to produce a winner.

Ball, who had almost pulled out of the fight due to flu, feared his dream had died. But on New Year's Eve a call from his manager Paul 'PJ' Rowson provided the perfect pick-me-up.

Rowson had matched up him up with another shot at the vacant belt, this time against Newark's Andrew Lowe at Walsall Town Hall on February 26.

Ball said: "Not winning the belt first time round ruined my Christmas.

"I had put so much into it and I was so disappointed with the draw.

"Becoming the Midlands champion was the only present I wanted."

Rejuventated, Ball headed straight back to the gym as reality dawned he would have to be at his best to beat a fighter who has only ever been stopped once.

Lowe's one shot at an area belt brought about his only stoppage, when he was beaten in eight rounds by Telford's Mark Lloyd in a Midlands welterweight title fight at Wolverhampton Civic Hall in June 2008.

Confident

However, the 30-year-old has also been beaten twice on points and Ball feels confident that – having gone 10 rounds in December at "75 to 80 per cent" – he can take his game to a level his oppoment simply can't match.

He said: "If you look at our records there is not much between us.

"We've both got to go out and prove ourselves. But, having done the 10 rounds now, I know I have an extra few gears to pick up on.

"He's a half-decent boxer and I am not going to take anything for granted.

"I am going to go in there thinking he has trained just as hard as me and do what I have got to do.

"But, hopefully, I should be too big and strong for him."

For tickets, call 07976 283157.

CRADLEY featherweight Chris Male is looking for a new opponent for his return to the ring at Walsall Town Hall later this month after Stoyan Serbezov pulled out of the fight through injury.

The Bulgarian is facing a lengthy period on the sidelines after tearing the ligaments in his elbow in the first round of his fight against Terry Flannigan last month, which was stopped early in the second round at the Doncaster Dome.

It will rule Serbezov out of the six-rounder on February 26, which is unbeaten Male's first fight since breaking his right hand in two places during his first title win last June.

The British Masters featherweight champion couldn't punch for three months after that, but has been back in full training since November and admits he feels soem sympathy for Serbezov.

He said: "Nobody wants to hear of anybody getting injured, especially after what happened to me last time.

"I wish him all the best, I don't know him but I know what he is going through."

A shot at the vacant English title has been mooted ever since the 28-year-old Male won his first belt, as part of a seemingly-inevitable collision course with Leicester's Del Rogers.

Rogers holds the Midlands title that Male is still a top contender to, but the fight has been on and off for the last 12 months.

Belt

Crawley's former International Masters champion Ben Jones has now entered the equation as a possible co-challenger for Male, who wants to be put in for the English belt as soon as possible.

He said: "I will look forward to it, whoever is on the other side of the ring.

"But if I had to put my money on who that would be, it would probably be Ben Jones, because I have been asking to fight Del Rogers for a year already.

"I am not knocking the lad and I don't know too much about his situation, but it seems to me that they have well and truly wrapped him up in cotton wool."

Jamie Ball, front, and fellow fighters, middle row, left to right, Lee Glover, Chris Male and, top, from left, Tom Bowen, Myles Holder and Danny Clews are all on the February 26 bumper bill at Walsall Town Hall

The Sandwell and Great Barr Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, February 3, 2011.

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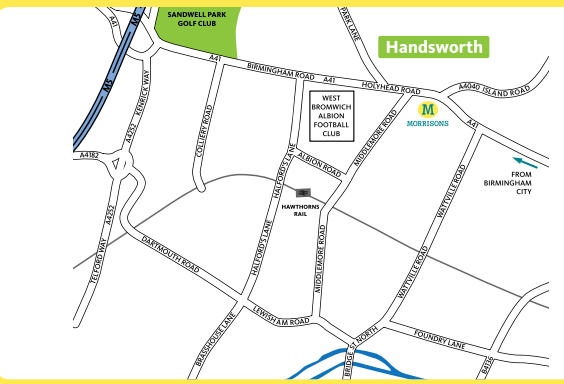

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